

# Bridging Worlds

## The Ghost Ports of Kewaunee County



State Archaeology and Maritime Preservation Program  
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WISCONSIN  
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MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



# **Bridging Worlds**

## **The Ghost Ports of Kewaunee County**

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Wisconsin Historical Society-State Historic Preservation Office

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## Abstract

In 2022 and 2023, the Wisconsin Historical Society's State Archaeology and Maritime Preservation Program conducted research on the rural coastal commercial piers of Kewaunee County, as part of the Wisconsin Lost Coastal Community Project. Our investigations were generously funded by Wisconsin's Coastal Management Program.

Archival research identified eight lost coastal communities in Kewaunee County: Sprague's Pier, Sandy Bay, Dean's Pier/Carlton, Grimm's Pier, Alaska Pier, Langworthy, Silver Creek, and Foscoro. Maritime and terrestrial investigations confirmed that remnants of 19<sup>th</sup> century piers still stand at four sites: Sandy Bay, Dean's Pier/Carlton, Grimm's Pier, and Alaska Pier. Staff found no surviving traces of piers at Langworthy or Foscoro. Survey was not attempted at Sprague's Pier since it is within the exclusion zone of the Kewaunee Power Station. Project staff did not identify Silver Creek in archival sources until after the maritime survey was completed, but review of aerial photography suggests that few if any traces of that pier remain.

Project members conducted terrestrial survey at Sandy Bay and Dean's Pier, resulting in confirmation that 19<sup>th</sup> century deposits and features belonging to the pier support complexes still survive. Team members found deposits relating to the McNally Mill and a possible wood-working/carpentry activity area and a scatter of items possibly belonging to the pier store and later cheese factory at Sandy Bay. In addition, team members documented the probable remains of a mill at Dean's Pier/Carlton. These sites are considered to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Archival research, focusing on contemporary newspaper accounts, allowed staff to reconstruct histories of each of the lost port communities. We present these histories here along with the results of our archaeological investigations.



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***For Jim Skibo***



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## Acknowledgements

The authors of this report would like to thank Wisconsin's Coastal Management Program for funding the Kewaunee County survey for the Lake Michigan Lost Coastal Community Project. Their assistance now and in the past has been invaluable. With the Coastal Management Program's help, we have expanded our efforts northward along Wisconsin's coastline and gained crucial comparative data on Wisconsin's lost coastal communities.

The authors would also like to thank Dominion Energy, EnergySolutions, and Laura and Kurt Wolske for their kindness in welcoming our team onto their properties, and for their interest in helping us reconstruct the history of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shores.

Daniel Joyce lent both his expertise and his ground penetrating radar equipment to our endeavor, and we thank him for his good humor and his willingness to endure one of the most difficult surveys he has yet undertaken on the brushy bluff lines above Lake Michigan.

A very special thank you goes to volunteers Bob Jaeck and Bob LaViolette, who helped with survey both on land and below the waves. Though conditions were not always pleasant, their company was. We also extend thanks to Michele Hagerman for proofreading and editing this tome.

Much of our background research followed the lines of an earlier ghost port study conducted by Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Association historians Dr. Dick Boyd, Russel Leitz, and Douglas Weimer. Mr. Leitz was particularly gracious enough to share prior research materials relating to the Kewaunee County pier communities.

We thank the staff at the Kewaunee County Historical Society who were kind enough to open their doors in the off-season and share their knowledge of the local community and Kewaunee County's history.

Special thanks are extended to State Historic Preservation Officer Daina Penkiunas for approving and facilitating this project, and to other members of the SHPO staff who listened patiently to our anecdotes about 19<sup>th</sup> century Kewaunee County. Maritime staff member Jordan Ciesielczyk-Gibson lent his expertise and creativity to the project behind the scenes.

Finally, our everlasting thanks go to Dr. James Skibo, who guided us through minor difficulties and kept us on the right track. You will be missed, Jim.

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# Chapter One: Confronting Ghosts

## *Ronksville, 2019*

The roots of the Lake Michigan Lost Lakeshore Community Project (LMLLCP) extend back to 2008, when the Wisconsin Historical Society's Maritime Preservation and Archaeology program conducted an underwater archaeological survey of the wreck of the schooner *Northerner* (Meverden and Thomsen 2010). The goal of the survey was to evaluate the wreck's condition with an eye on potential listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The *Northerner's* vessel enrollment documents were located and examined during research for the proposed listing. Her final enrollments identified her last owner as Nicholas Ronk, and Ronk's place of residence as 'Ronksville', Wisconsin. Unable to find any ready historical reference to such a place, our researchers concluded that the town must be a lost community situated somewhere along Wisconsin's Lake Michigan coastline and left the matter behind as an unsolved mystery.

Two years later, the Wisconsin Historical Society featured a photograph of the wreck of the *Northerner* on a poster celebrating Wisconsin Archaeology Month 2010 (Figure 1). The poster caught the attention of three descendants of Nicholas Ronk and his brother Paul Ronk. The scattered family members independently contacted the Wisconsin Historical Society asking for copies of their own. In conversations, the mystery of Ronksville came up again. The Ronk descendants found historic deeds pinpointing properties owned by Nicholas and Paul Ronk in the town of Belgium, on Ozaukee County's lake coast, north of Port Washington, Wisconsin. One such document, dating to December 27, 1858, deeded a small parcel of land along the lakeshore to the 'Luxemburger Pier Company.' In total, the Company's holdings appear on that document as a two-acre property and a pier, along with a connecting road set aside for public use "forever." The legal document forbids the Luxemburger Pier Company from breaking the two-acre parcel into smaller lots and reserves the right to any timber on the Company's land to the Ronk brothers.

Armed with this information, over the following months Wisconsin Historical Society staff compared historic maps and property plats to the deed, and narrowed our search to a small area of coastline occupied by a string of modern



Figure 1: 2010 Wisconsin Archaeology Month poster featuring the *Northerner*.



*Figure 2: Detail from 1866/1877 navigational chart with Ronksville, its pier, and support buildings shown (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1877).*

lakeshore homes. One coastal chart, compiled by the United States Government in 1866/1877, bore the clear label ‘Ronksville’ next to symbols representing a small cluster of buildings and a pier (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1877) (Figure 2). The location matched that of the holdings of the Luxemburger Pier Company. In 2019, with the enthusiastic support of the Ronk descendants, Society staff conducted a survey to relocate the pier and confirm the location of Ronksville itself (Thomsen et al. 2020).

Anomalies on sonar scans provided by Crossmon Consulting, LLC were investigated and proved to be an L-shaped line of angular stone extending from the shoreline east into the lake. Wood fragments were scattered amongst the stone rubble. Just how old the fragments were or what they represented could not easily be determined. Dr. Daniel Joyce of the Kenosha Public Museum generously volunteered his time and expertise to the project, bringing a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) unit to the site to scan the beach. Metal detector sweeps through the same area revealed a cluster of signals consistent with buried metal items.

As work on the beach wrapped up, observers called our attention to a particularly intriguing find on the shore just north of the former limits of the Nicholas Ronk property. Team members accompanied David Hirn, Jonathan Ronk, and other Ronk family members and descendants to that stretch of shoreline, where worked timber stuck out of the sand at the base of a low escarpment marking the high-water mark. In short order, a set of two timbers fastened through with iron drift pins lay exposed on the beach. They bore signs of having once been scarphed together with additional timbers, likely forming part of the decking of the pier. David Hirn and Jonathan Ronk delightedly sat together on the timbers, striking the same poses that their respective ancestors had in one of the two surviving photos of the pier in its heyday (Figure 3). Their family’s past became something tangible that they could see and touch. What was forgotten was remembered. Ronksville was found.



Afterwards, our staff was left with many questions. Not the least of which was how an entire town within easy traveling distance of local population centers could vanish so completely that no trace remained apart from family lore, obscure coastal charts and mariner's guides, and one-line mentions in 150-year-old newspaper columns. The answer, it seemed, was that Ronksville was not a town at all. It was a lost commercial port. Ronksville had no mayor, no elections, no town council, no school, and little if anything in the way of service infrastructure. Even so, it played an important role and helped shape the future of southern Ozaukee County.



*Figure 3: David Hirn (left) and Jonathan Ronk (right) on the fragment of their ancestor's pier.*

The little complex of buildings at Ronksville served as the 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of a gas station and product distribution center. The Ronk brothers produced or bought cordwood and sold it to lake steamers so that they could fuel their boilers. They sold and shipped wood via the *Northerner* and other schooners to cities such as Milwaukee and Chicago where it served as both fuel and firewood (e.g., *The Daily Milwaukee News* 1872) (Figure 4). Ronksville was also an import point where manufactured goods were unloaded and brought inland to the Ronk brother's businesses in nearby Lake Church. The Ronksville pier, built by the Luxemburger Pier Company, was the critical piece of infrastructure that made their businesses possible.

The waters of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan coast are shallow for some distance away from shore, excepting where the larger rivers enter the lake. Ships large enough to carry bulk cargo and large numbers of passengers could not land directly on the beaches, which limited both the places cargoes could be dropped off or picked up and the amount of cargo that could be moved between land and water. This was a problem for the rural 19<sup>th</sup> century residents of the lakeshore counties, who needed access to supplies, ways to ship their produce to market, and swift transportation (Boyd et al. 2020).

Family history identified Nicholas and Paul Ronk as founders of the Luxemburger Pier Company. The brothers were merchants who owned an array of businesses in Lake Church, several miles inland in the Town of Belgium. The story, as family remembered it, was that the brothers built the



## MARINE INTELLIGENCE.

Part of Milwaukee, April 15th.

### ARRIVED.

Schr J. S. Wallace, Grim's Pier, 45 cds wood.  
Schr E. M. Cone, Ronk's Pier 70 cds wood.  
Saw Home, Manitowoc, 4,500 posts.

### CLEARED.

Tug Kittle Smoke, Manitowoc.  
Schr E. M. Cone, Ronk's Pier.  
Schr J. S. Wallace, Grim's Pier.  
Saw Home, Manitowoc  
Saw Milton, White Lake, 25 bbls and 16 tes pork.

*Figure 4: Notation of delivery of 70 cords of wood from Ronk's Pier to Milwaukee via the schooner E. M. Cone, and the E. Cone's departure to pick up another load (Daily Milwaukee News 1872). Grimm's Pier, which also appears in this notice, is one of the Kewaunee County lost ports.*

pier so they could get goods to their businesses faster, more efficiently, and more cheaply than overland travel from Port Washington or Milwaukee allowed. A variety of needed and wanted products flowed into the region quickly, at lower prices, which benefited both Lake Church and the surrounding countryside. The pier complex provided a point of sale for timber and agricultural products shipped out to markets in Port Washington, Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, and Chicago, which again brought benefits to the region at large. The Ronk brothers—with careful planning and good luck—had the potential to make a profit on both the inbound and outbound legs while being buoyed up along with the surrounding region. As a place, Ronksville consisted only of the pier and its support complex. As a social and economic engine, Ronksville stretched inland, south to the larger port cities, and beyond.

Accounts of other lost pier communities all along Wisconsin's Great Lakes coasts began to pop up as our search for archival traces of Ronksville continued. Some, such as the lost lumber ports of Clay Banks Township in Door County and stone shipping complexes in the Apostle Islands of Lake Superior, had been the recent focus of underwater and historical investigations (Boyd, Leitz and Weimer 2020; Meverden et al. 2012). Other lost coastal communities were mentioned in blog posts, pamphlets, and short articles published by local historians (e.g., Dopke 2009). Still others appeared in advertisements or brief mentions in long-forgotten newspaper columns (e.g., *Sheboygan Press* 1932). Some of the ports existed only for a few years. At other places, tiny unincorporated communities remain today, their piers gone, and their faces turned away from Lake Michigan's waters.

The mission of the Wisconsin Historical Society is to connect people to the past by collecting, preserving, and sharing stories. The lost communities of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline seemed to us to be a particularly important story long overlooked. Histories tend to push the rural areas that make up most of the coast into the background behind coastal cities, inland mill sites and trading posts, and shipwrecks. Maritime archaeologists stick to the water and terrestrial archaeologists remain on land. The lost ports tell a uniquely rural story that straddles the terrestrial and maritime worlds. More than that, the ports represent mechanisms that allowed entirely new

populations and economies to enter Wisconsin and radically transform it. Without the lost ports, Wisconsin might be a very different place today.

To the Native peoples whose coastlines the ports were founded on, the ports brought invasion, devastation, and loss. To colonists, they were lifelines. To immigrants, they represented economic opportunity. To merchants, speculators, and businessmen, they brought the hope of profit and dreams of retirement in wealth and ease. Rather than facilitating the growth of a single coastal town or city, they supplied wide rural hinterlands. The lumber, brick, stone, grain, fish, and cheese that passed over the piers built and fed the Midwest. Whether directly or indirectly, the rural ports supported a good proportion of Wisconsin's lakeshore population. Rural ports accelerated the transformation of coastal Wisconsin from forest to farm. Their owners and operators steered the course of local economies.

### ***Finding the Lost: 2022 and 2023 Archaeological Investigations***

Thanks to the generosity of the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP), in July 2022 archaeologists and volunteers with the Wisconsin Historical Society's State Archaeology and Maritime Preservation Program embarked on a study to investigate the lost coastal communities of Kewaunee County. Kewaunee County was chosen both for its potential to harbor intact pier remnants, and for its position on the southern fringes of Wisconsin's great pineries. Staff hoped to compare findings in this region to those at Ronksville, and to the results of the Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Association's study in Clay Banks Township in southern Door County. Would the Kewaunee County pier communities resemble those at Ronksville, or those further north? Were there commonalities, or was each complex different? What roles did the piers play in the economic development of Kewaunee County? How did the ports function, and who owned and managed them?

Staff documented surviving traces of four pier sites in Kewaunee County: Sandy Bay Pier, Dean's Pier/Carlton, Grimm's Pier, and Alaska Pier (Figures 5 to 7). Team members also searched for traces of Langworthy Pier and Foscoro Pier, but found no remaining structures at the pier's reported locations. Staff did not investigate Sprague's Pier on Stony Point since it lies within the exclusion zone of a decommissioned nuclear power plant south of Kewaunee. The existence of the Silver Creek pier came to our attention only after our fieldwork was completed.

Project members completed Phase II underwater archaeological surveys at the four sites where pier remnants remain, using a combination of in-water manual measurements and use of a laser transit set up on shore to plot the locations of each pier piling or group of pilings. The submerged components of the pier sites were examined, and their characteristics and conditions noted as well. The surviving pier segments range widely in size and level of preservation. All were constructed of large diameter, wooden pilings—some with single pilings and some with multiple pilings grouped together. Due to the shallow nature of the coastline in this region, the piers extend out approximately 510 to 810 feet from shore, terminating in 10 to 15 feet of water.

The surviving pilings are likely made of cedar and remain in remarkable shape. At some of the pier sites, the pilings were worn down by wave and ice action over the years and sit some distance below the water's surface. At other pier sites, the pilings come up to within inches of the water's

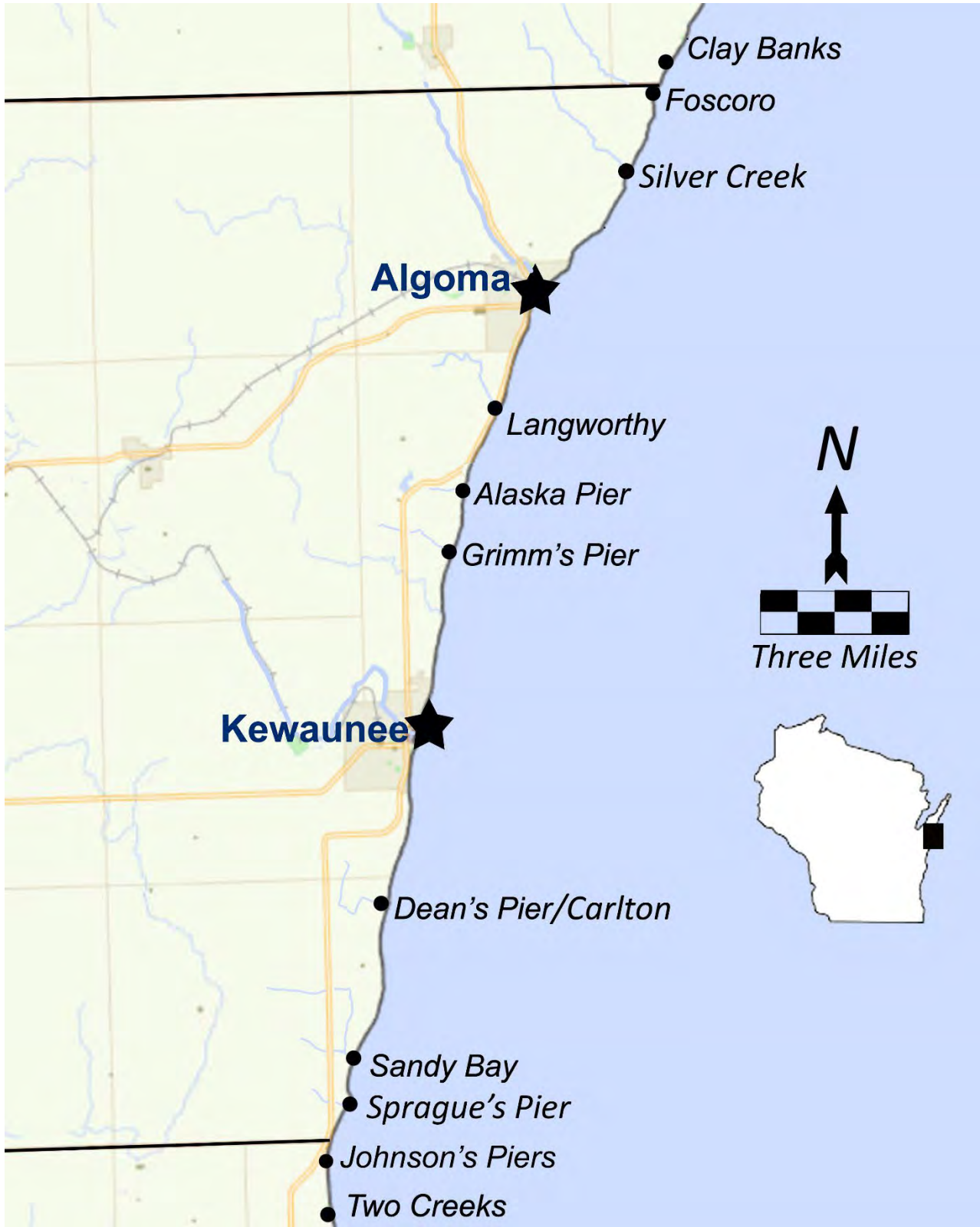


Figure 5: Location of known lost ports on the Lake Michigan Coast of Kewaunee County, Wisconsin.



*Figure 6: Pier piling at Dean's Pier/Carlton, just below the water's surface.*

surface or even protrude slightly above them in calm conditions. Many of the piers were modified and rebuilt several times, and evidence of this is seen in irregular piling patterns and the varying sizes of the pilings. No large artifact assemblages were located during the summer 2022 survey alongside any of the piers; however, many associated artifacts certainly lie buried and protected beneath the lake bottom. Visibility was particularly poor at some locations, obscuring our view of the lake bottom and pier structures, and it is likely that divers missed some elements at each site.

As befitting a port community project, the maritime investigations were combined with Phase I terrestrial surveys. Project members investigated the beaches and eroding lake bluffs at all four locations without finding signs of structures, features, and/or artifacts. However, a cursory metal detector investigation of the summit of the shoreline bluffs above the Sandy Bay pier site confirmed the presence of 19<sup>th</sup> century artifacts belonging to the terrestrial portion of the port complex.

Project team members returned in May of 2023 to expand the project's terrestrial investigation at the Sandy Bay complex and to investigate onshore portions of the complex at Dean's Pier/Carlton. Team members completed a full metal detector sweep in conjunction with a Ground Penetrating

Radar (GPR) study in the oldest portion of the Sandy Bay complex, at the location where staff found artifacts in 2022. Small-scale sampling of the site resulted in the discovery of two clusters of metal objects, including a concentration of broken woodworking files. Other items found include machine parts, a woodworking or blacksmithing tool, a large bolt, and machine-cut nails. The GPR study did not find clear evidence of foundation walls or cellars (not unexpected, given the presumed simple wood-frame construction of the complex's buildings) but did identify disturbance from past activity at the site. Investigations north of the original survey area pinpointed the location of a general store and/or cheese factory operated by John Waegli, the foreman and later owner of the Sandy Bay complex.

At Dean's Pier/Carlton, staff interviewed the current residents of the lot that includes the pier road, within the heart of the Dean's Pier/Carlton complex. The family confirmed that 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural deposits are present on the property. They guided team members to a piling that is exposed seasonally on the beach and to a structural depression that may mark the location of a mill operated by Dean & Borland.

As a result of these investigations, the Sandy Bay and Dean's Pier/Carlton sites were determined to be potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

### ***“From Carlton”: Bringing Kewaunee's Lost Port Communities to Life***

In tandem with the archaeological investigations, team members set about finding evidence of Kewaunee County's lost ports in archival records. County histories, settler's accounts, local lore, photographs from the Kewaunee County Historical Society, family collections, mariner's charts and guides, plat maps, and library collections were examined wherever and whenever possible. Staff and volunteers scoured newspaper accounts for mentions of pier communities, pier owners, and community residents. During this phase of investigation, the existence of Sprague's Pier and the Silver Creek pier came to the attention of the project team.

Dean's Pier/Carlton enjoys the largest archival footprint. The *Kewaunee Enterprise* ran numerous columns written by “John,” a correspondent from Carlton in the 1870s. His full identity was John A. Whitaker, a carpenter, teamster, Justice of the Peace, and agent for agricultural machinery. He lived about a mile from Dean's Pier, counted the pier owners and foremen as his neighbors, and delighted in the people and events of his world. In Whitaker's dispatches, the little community and its inhabitants come alive in full emotional color.

Unfortunately, there were few Whitakers in Kewaunee County. The local papers employed a rotating and unreliable selection of volunteers and paid correspondents who sent in news from rural areas when they felt like it. Correspondents came and went, leaving large gaps in the historical record. They had their own individual styles and concerns. One focused on social events and visits, while another kept careful records of which ships loaded at the pier or what the local farmers planted that season. One correspondent might be dry as dust, while another spoke in cryptic in-jokes and long-forgotten pop phrases. The earliest pier communities operated at the dawn of newspaper publishing in Wisconsin, in a time when communication was slow and unreliable and paper a precious commodity.



In the end, the Lake Michigan Lost Lakeshore Community Project succeeded in compiling sketchy histories of three lost ports, basic histories of three more, and more extensive histories of Dean's Pier/Carlton and Foscoro. Project members presented our research to numerous groups, including the general public, land-use planners, diving enthusiasts, landowners, and historians. Information gathered during the project was uploaded to [wisconsinshipwrecks.org](http://wisconsinshipwrecks.org), added to the web maps for the Lake Michigan State Water Trail, and included in kiosks used by the public at Wisconsin's Maritime Museums. Through these efforts, we hope to ensure that the forgotten ports of Kewaunee are remembered once more.



*Figure 7: Diver surveying the shallow water at Sandy Bay Pier, 2022.*

## **Chapter Two**

### **Those Who Came Before**

Native American populations have resided along the shores of Lake Michigan since the glaciers receded—a history spanning more than 13,000 years. The lake and its river systems formed Wisconsin’s first highway system, across which dugout canoes transported travelers and goods. Wisconsin’s waterways saw the rise of hunting and fishing cultures, farming villages, and vast trade networks. Today’s Ho-Chunk and Menominee nations trace their ancestry to the peoples who lived and moved along Lake Michigan’s western shore. In the tumultuous decades following European contact, refugee fleets carrying Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Meskwaki, Sauk, Odawa, and Wendat families crossed Lake Michigan, seeking safety in Wisconsin. Traces of this full and deep sweep of history are abundant along the length of the Lake Michigan coastline. Some underlie the locations of the lost port communities, as at Foscoro, where 1000 to 2000-year-old artifacts have been found.

#### ***Contact***

The first European expedition to Wisconsin, led by Jean Nicolet, arrived on the western shores of Lake Michigan in the early 1600s (Trigger 1976:246–247). It was another thirty years before another of his countrymen followed (Lurie and Jung 2009:1–2). When Nicolet turned eastward again on his way back to New France, he left a stable society of farmers and fishers behind him (Overstreet 1997). The ancestors of the Ho-Chunk and Menominee went about their daily lives.

Trade routes linked all of the peoples of the Great Lakes and had for centuries. Early French records and archaeological finds reveal a wide range of commodities exchanged by the Native peoples of the Great Lakes: tobacco, furs, bison hide, marine shell, stone pipes, fish and nut oils, cloth, tools, copper, cornmeal, dried fish, woven cord and netting, cooking pots, raw stone, and charms (Drooker 1997, 1999; Fox 2002; Mazrim 2011a, 2011c; Speth 1994; Trigger 1976:63). Information was exchanged as well. The French learned about the lands beyond the Great Lakes when they were still hundreds of miles distant (e.g., Champlain 1971:97–98).

The region’s connectivity worked both for and against the original peoples of Wisconsin once Europeans arrived in North America. Between 1600 and 1640, settlement and household sizes sharply declined at sites at opposite ends of the Great Lakes region, a drop due mainly to the introduction of European diseases (Betts 2006; Snow and Starna 1989). At that time, Wisconsin—along with the rest of the Great Lakes region—was a world of politically independent villages and bands that came together and drifted apart in fluid ways. Leadership was as much a matter of skill and charisma as a matter of birth. European colonizers, used to rigid social hierarchies ruled by absolute, divinely-favored hereditary monarchs, found the social kaleidoscope confusing and overwhelming. They responded by trying to reshape the Native world into nation-states like their own (White 2010:16–17).

## *Conflict*

The ancestral Ho-Chunk and Menominee were well positioned along a crucial trade route linking the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River via the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. Outside populations seeking European goods relocated north and westward towards the Fox Valley, which brought them into conflict with Wisconsin's residents (Kellogg 1956:158; Mazrim and Esarey 2007:152, 185–186; Thwaites 1898:225–227; Thwaites 1902:6). Various confederacies fought for control of the trade, for vengeance, and to defend their homes.

Meanwhile, far to the east, members of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy had been sparring with their neighbors since the establishment of the fur trade. The Haudenosaunee and their Wendat Confederacy rivals engaged with different spheres of European influence. The Wendat and their neighbors allied with the French. The Haudenosaunee allied with the British. Just as conflict reached a bloody conclusion in Wisconsin, the Haudenosaunee launched an unprecedented and British-supplied campaign of expansion. The war served as a means of economic capture for the Haudenosaunee and as a proxy conflict for the rival European powers.

First, the smaller and weaker neighbors of the Haudenosaunee were absorbed or driven out of their homelands. Then, in the winter of 1648, the war was taken directly into the heart of the Wendat Confederacy. Refugees split into two main groups: one fled eastward down the St. Lawrence to areas of French settlement, while another launched canoes and paddled westward to Rock Island, at the mouth of Green Bay (Blair 1911:148; Mason 1986:15–16). It wasn't long before Odawa, Petun, and adjacent Ojibwe bands were forced to join the retreat (Blair 1911:153; Mason 1986:16). Those who remained were compelled to move to Detroit and swear loyalty to the Haudenosaunee by the end of 1653 (Blair 1911:150; Tanner 1987:30), a move that pushed Sauk and Meskwaki living in eastern Michigan from their homes. As the dominoes fell, more waves of refugees streamed through the Straits of Mackinac towards Green Bay and Wisconsin's Lake Michigan coastline (Mason 1986).

Most Odawa and Wendat families filtered back eastward when conditions improved, but many of the former residents of Lower Michigan decided to remain in Wisconsin. The French followed. The Mission of St. Francis Xavier was founded on the east side of Green Bay in 1669. Fort La Baye was constructed nearby in 1670, continuing in operation until 1698. A second mission opened a few miles south of Green Bay, near modern De Pere, in 1671 (Tanner 1987).

After 1681, most Ho-Chunk lived well south of the Door Peninsula, in a village at Doty Island (Hodge 1910:958). Other peoples, including some Menominee, Sauk, Ojibwe, and Meskwaki, resided in mixed-ethnicity villages, or established temporary camps on the Door Peninsula and elsewhere as needs and circumstances dictated. The largest population centers along the coastline were home to Anishinaabeg/Potawatomi—near the head of Green Bay, on Rock Island, on both shores of the Door Peninsula, and along Lake Michigan's coast (Naunapper 2007:172–174).

The coast was not uncontested. Manitowoc historian Louis Falge recorded oral histories of conflict between Ojibwe and Odawa and Potawatomi communities in the mid-1700s (Falge 1912:11). The social landscape was unsettled and uncertain. Margaret Okeewa, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Odawa resident of



Kewaunee, described a great battle where Kewaunee would one day stand, and the trauma of burying her fallen son and husband there in the aftermath (*Algoma Record* 1916a).

### *Cessions and Removal*

The first strike at Native sovereignty along the coast came in 1825. Representatives of the United States government met in Prairie du Chien with members of most of Wisconsin's Native tribal groups and confederacies, with the supposed goal of resolving a long Ojibwe vs. Dakota battle for control of northern Wisconsin's wild rice beds. The U.S., as the other colonial powers had before them, wanted to negotiate with Nation States, not villages, bands, or tribes. They started by drawing 'National' borders to constrain the people they wished to control. The concept was not one that resonated strongly with the Native participants in the meeting, and the attendees certainly did not have the authority to make decisions of such magnitude for the entirety of Wisconsin's population. Nevertheless, the treaty was signed and agreements were made to return to Prairie du Chien to hash out details in the future (Loew 2001:27–28).

From the point of view of the United States, the First Treaty of Prairie du Chien made things simple. Instead of a fluid landscape where multi-ethnic communities and political associations formed and split apart, the 'official' map now showed something akin to the Colonial states of the Eastern Seaboard. Under the terms of the 1825 treaty and a follow-up agreement between the United States and the Menominee at Butte des Morts in 1827, much of the southern Lake Michigan coastline 'belonged' to the Anishinaabeg (Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe), disregarding deep Menominee and Ho-Chunk ties to the region (Loew 2001:27–28). The Menominee were accorded the northern shoreline. The land was assigned 'owners'—and land with owners is land that can be bought and sold.

Five years later, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act into law (Loew 2001:59). With the stroke of a pen, over 60,000 people living east of the Mississippi River were condemned to forcible exile in the west based on their ethnicity. In the view of the United States, Native peoples within Wisconsin were subject to the Act, and a policy of ethnic cleansing was put into place. Subsequent treaties contained clauses requiring that the signatories sell their land to the U. S. and relocate west. The peoples of Wisconsin resisted with better success than many of their brethren to the south.

In 1831, Menominee leaders were invited to Washington, D.C. Chief Oshkosh, suspecting ill-intentions, refused to go under the mistaken belief that no treaty could be ratified without his participation. Those that did go were pressured into signing away all of their homeland lying between the Fox River and the Lake Michigan shore, as far south as Milwaukee and to the tip of the Door Peninsula. Fortunately for the Menominee, subsequent revisions to the treaty made without their knowledge threw its legality into doubt (Loew 2001:29) (Figure 8).

The Potawatomi and other Anishinaabeg were next in 1833. Anishinaabeg leaders came to Chicago that year to negotiate. The United States presented a treaty requiring the Anishinaabeg to sell their remaining lands in Wisconsin and move west before the close of 1836. Feeling that they had no choice, the Anishinaabeg representatives signed (Loew 2001:91). The blow landed heaviest on the Potawatomi, who had called the area home for over a century by that point. A

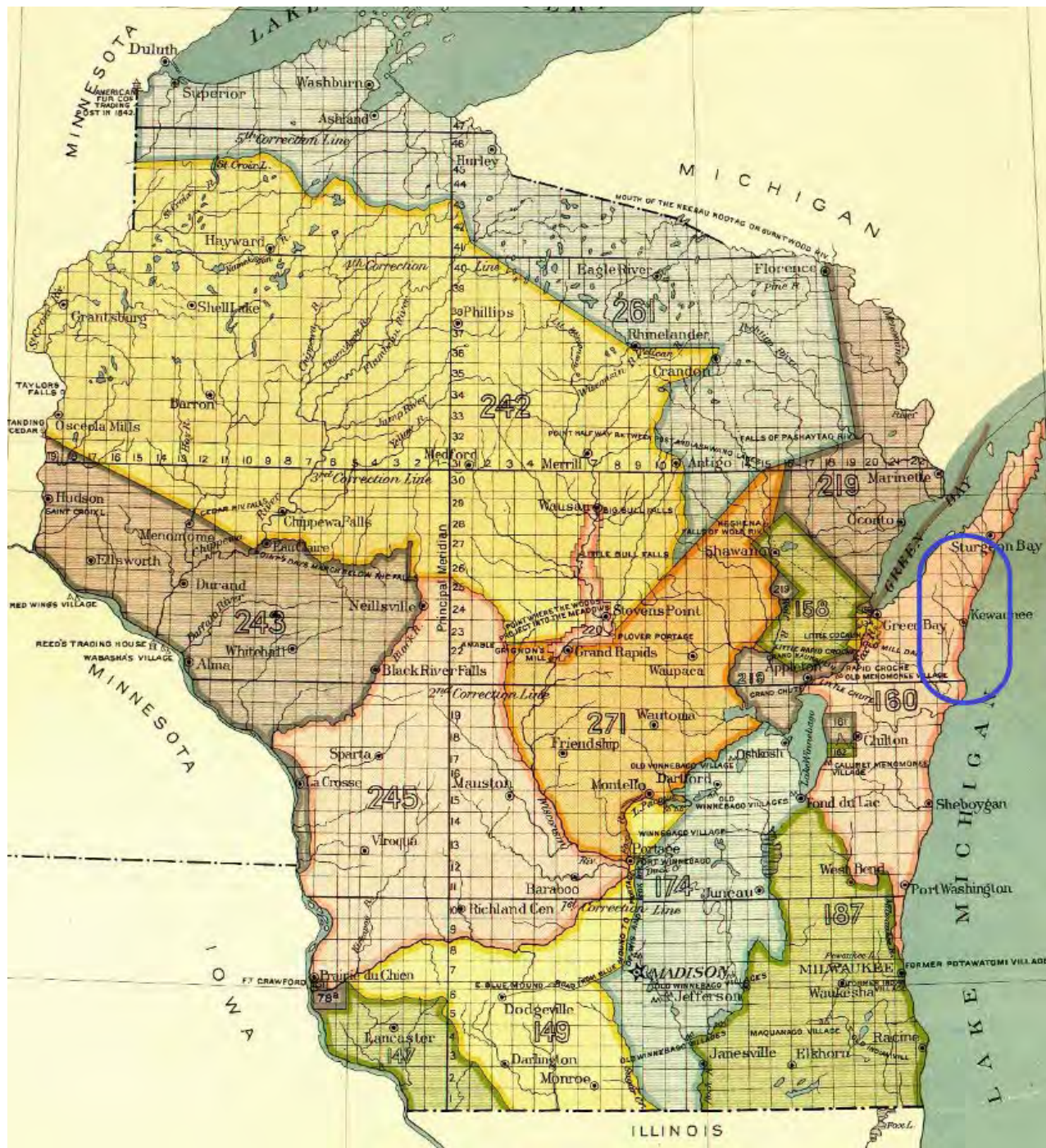


Figure 8: Map of Land Cessions (Royce 1895: Plate LXXI). Kewaunee County coastline is circled in blue. Treaty 160 is the 1831 cession, which initiated the path to Euro-American colonization of Wisconsin's northern Lake Michigan coastline.

three-year countdown began. When time was up, some dissenters fled into the north woods. Others carried on with life as usual. Still others moved from place to place, seeking privacy and refuge, keeping ahead of the authorities. They came to be known as the “strolling bands” (Loew 2001:91).

Another summons was sent out to the Menominee, but Chief Oshkosh fended off the removal attempt by agreeing to withdraw from the lakeshore to traditional territories north and west of Lake Winnebago. The subsequent treaty, known as the Treaty of the Cedars, ensured that the Menominee at least would remain in Wisconsin (Kellogg 1931). Though a group of Menominee representatives were pressured into signing away the Menominee’s remaining Wisconsin lands in 1848, Chief Oshkosh appealed and pointed out that the representatives had been coerced. President Millard Fillmore agreed. During the six-year gap between that signing and the conclusion of the Treaty of the Wolf River in 1854, the exact status of Menominee claims to Kewaunee County and the Door Peninsula was uncertain. Formal colonization was put on hold. After the Treaty of the Wolf River was ratified, the Menominee received a permanent reservation in Wisconsin and the northern lakeshore was put up for sale (Loew 2001:29).

### ***Resistance and Persistence***

The Strolling Bands and other Native residents continued to live as they had before, persisting in their seasonal lifeways for many years after the Treaty of the Wolf River was signed (Figure 9).



*Figure 9: ‘Joe Wisconsin’, grandson of Potawatomi leader Pamobamee, near Wausauke in 1918. Mr. Wisconsin was born at Sheboygan Falls ca. 1833 and lived through the expulsion of his people from Wisconsin’s Lake Michigan coastline (Wisconsin Historical Society Image 24377).*





They greeted the first land speculators and lumbermen to arrive on Lake Michigan's shores. It was their roads and trails that the white settlers traveled. It was their villages, camps, and trading posts that dominated the landscape. As the front of colonization and settlement progressed northward, however, most Native residents of the coast fled or were forced out.

Larger villages were situated near the points most attractive for harbor development and along inland waterways where colonists thought mills should go. French and British traders staked their claims first, setting up posts where harbor communities were later built. The primary village in Kewaunee County was located at Black Earth on the Mishicot River, several miles inland and west of Sandy Bay. Simon Kahquados, last traditional Chief of the Potawatomi, was born there. Black Earth's extensive holdings—large herds of horses, acres of cultivated ground, cemeteries, and households—extended eastward as far as Sandy Bay, where the residents kept their

summer fishing fleet of dugout canoes (Wing 1922). Big Spring village was located four miles south of Black Earth and another community was located west of Kewaunee. Kewaunee itself was a summer rendezvous similar to Sandy Bay, where fishing fleets gathered. Supplies were obtained at a trading post at Neshota village (Two Rivers) (Wing 1921–1922:1–2).

The local leader was known to the colonists as “King Ketoose” (Figure 10). He and his people did their best to co-exist with the unwelcome strangers moving onto their lands. Early Euro-American residents of the coastal settlements told historian George Wing that some of the local Potawatomi helped to feed them in their first winters on the lakeshore. One man, known to the colonists only as ‘Indian Joe,’ was astonished that residents of Kewaunee were starving when there were so many deer in adjacent forests, and offered to bring in as many as they needed (Wing 1945). Simon Kahquados, traditional Chief of the Potawatomi and grandson of Ketoose, remembered traveling for miles to Euro-American settlements to get presents of pie from kind women and showing off his archery skills in town to earn coins (Wing 1922).

The Black Earth Potawatomi, unlike many along the lakeshore, held legal title to their land. Trader Andrew Vieau, who had Potawatomi ancestry through his mother, attempted to provide the community some security by conveying ownership to them ca. 1850 (*Green Bay Press Gazette* 2014; Wing 1921–1922:1–2) (Figure 11). Their grace period came to an end in 1858, when settler John Axtell discovered that they were unaware of the need to pay taxes. He assumed the tax

burden for the property and obtained a ‘tax deed.’ The local authorities, eviction notice in hand and with an armed mob for backup, descended on the village after title transferred into Axtell’s name. By nightfall, hundreds of people were homeless and the village was in flames (*Luxemburg News* 1977).

The people of Black Earth scattered but did not stay away forever. They came back to Kewaunee County to hunt, plant crops, fish, make maple sugar, or gather other resources for as long as they could. Periodically, individuals or families journeyed into the cities and towns to sell goods (e.g., *Ahnapee Record* 1879b) (Figure 12). Some spent time at Shimmel’s saloon west of Dean’s Pier/Carlton, where they earned money by dancing for the guests. Black Earth Potawatomi continued to come to their traditional fishing grounds at Sandy Bay for years, harvesting suckers and other lake fish and planting crops. As late as the 1880s, Native residents appeared on the Federal census for Kewaunee County, refusing removal from the land they called home (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881c).

### ***Acknowledging Perspectives***

The story of Kewaunee’s rural pier communities can be told in many ways and from many perspectives. There is no one specific and ‘true’ way to encapsulate the events that led to their foundation and their eventual dissolution, but there are some truths that must be faced head-on, no matter how uncomfortable they make modern readers feel. All of Wisconsin was once Native land. Those portions that have not remained Native land were taken by force from people who had lived there since time immemorial and from refugees who had sought safety within its limits. Strangers came and perpetuated legal and physical violence upon Native communities, and then claimed the land for their own. Those that founded, managed, worked at, and benefitted from the pier complexes were a part of that violence—even if unwittingly.

From the perspective of Native history, the commercial piers represent a distillation of all of the horrors of the contact period. From the piers, great hordes of people arrived to assault Menominee and Anishinaabeg families and drive them from their homes. The newcomers brought economic and legal systems that the Native peoples were excluded from or victimized by, vices that ate at community and familial ties, prejudice, resentment, fear, and conflict. The piers took the forests away, leaving a devastated and desiccated landscape behind and leading directly to the great wildfires of the late 1800s.

Later Euro-American writers extolled the transformation of Wisconsin’s coastlines. From their perspective, a useless, dark, and foreboding forest was removed and a bountiful land of productive farms emerged in its place through the application of honest and laudable toil. The Native peoples who experienced the change, however, were forced to watch helplessly, in fear for themselves and their futures, as the forests and coastal fisheries that sustained them were destroyed for the benefit

15

**THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,**  
 CERTIFICATE)  
 No. 11,595.3

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

**WHEREAS** Andrew J. Vieau, of Manitowoc County,  
 Wisconsin,  
 has deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States, a Certificate of the REGISTER OF THE  
 LAND OFFICE at Green Bay, whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said  
 Andrew J. Vieau, according to the provisions of the  
 Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," for  
 the South West quarter of the North East quarter of  
 Section Twenty-nine, of Township Twenty-two North  
 of Range Twenty-four East; in the District of Lands  
 subject to sale at Green Bay Wisconsin; Containing  
 Forty Acres;

according to the official plat of the survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the SURVEYOR  
 GENERAL, which said tract has been purchased by the said Andrew J. Vieau.

**NOW KNOW YE,** That the  
**United States of America,** in consideration of the Premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress,  
 in such case made and provided, HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED, and by these presents DO GIVE AND GRANT,  
 unto the said Andrew J. Vieau,  
 and to his heirs, the said tract above described: **TO HAVE AND TO HOLD** the same, together with all the rights,  
 privileges, immunities, and appurtenances of whatsoever nature, thereunto belonging, unto the said \_\_\_\_\_  
 Andrew J. Vieau, and to his heirs and assigns forever.

**In Testimony Whereof, I, Zachary Taylor,**  
 PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made PATENT, and  
 the SEAL of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the First day of August,  
 in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and Forty-nine and of the  
 Independence of the United States the Seventy-fourth

**BY THE PRESIDENT: L. Taylor.**  
 By Tho. Ewing Jr. Sec'y,  
 Recorder of the General Land Office.




Figure 11: Land patent for the location of Black Earth Village, transferring title from the United States Government to trader Andrew J. Vieau in 1849. Vieau returned the land to the Black Earth Potawatomi.



*Figure 12: Potawatomi basket-sellers, ca. 1909. Photo likely taken in the vicinity of the Skunk Hill settlement in central Wisconsin (Wisconsin Historic Image 34114).*

of others. They watched as their medicines, their homes, and the graves of their ancestors were burned over, plowed over, and picked at by people who did not understand or respect them. The logging boom and the agricultural landscape that followed are still seen as nothing less than a desecration of the intentions and gifts of the Creator by some Native residents of Wisconsin today.

The pier builders came to make money. They came seeking success and security. They came to make a future for themselves and for their families. Futures were indeed made at the piers, not by or for the people who had lived there first.

## Chapter Three Arrivals

### *Colonization Begins*

The Americans and Europeans who took possession of Wisconsin came from varied backgrounds journeyed into the pineries for various reasons. Yankees, moving from colonized lands to the east, came to found colonies of their own, seeking new starts and large fortunes. Immigrants from Europe sought safety, stable employment, and control over their own destinies. Both populations are often grouped together under the term ‘settler.’ The Ho-Chunk, one of the original peoples of Wisconsin, have no such term. They refer to the newcomers as “Long Knives,” since their arrival came accompanied by the point of a sword.

The United States did not move to take actual control of Wisconsin until 1815. Along Lake Michigan’s coastline, the process of ethnic cleansing and replacement began in 1833 (Figure 13). Teams of surveyors went out to subdivide the Territory into saleable lots (Watrous 1909:47). Copies of the surveyor’s maps and notes were taken to land offices in Green Bay, Milwaukee, and other communities. When the designated deadline for Native peoples to leave the coast expired under the terms of the treaty provisions, the maps and notes were made available to land speculators, timbermen, colonists, and immigrants searching for opportunity in Menomoni and Anishinaabeg misfortune. Eastern Wisconsin was put up for sale at the cost of \$1.25 an acre (just over \$43 per acre in modern currency) (Watrous 1909:47).

Colonization and exploitation of the region’s natural resources began at the places that would become the lakeshore cities. In 1836, Jones King & Co. of Chicago booked passage for a group of lumbermen on the schooner *Wisconsin*, with orders to open a clearing so that surveyors could plat out Manitowoc. All but three of the men quit on their first night in the woods. Some defectors set out overland for Green Bay. Others followed the beach back to Sheboygan, where they caught transport to Chicago. The three who stayed built a cabin, cut timber for harvest, and cleared land in anticipation of the arrival of the survey team ([www.manitowocountyhistory.org](http://www.manitowocountyhistory.org)). The same year saw the first stirrings of colonies at Two Rivers and Kewaunee, where sawmills were put up. Actual settlement, however, did not really progress until the 1840s. Ahnapee, the last and northernmost of the larger surviving Lake Michigan ports, was not established until 1851 (the community was renamed Algoma in 1897) (Mansfield 1899:349).

Settlement in what would become the rural portions of the coastline was scatter-shot. Though a seemingly simple legal process was in place to convey land to new owners in the form of a government patent, the reality on the ground was chaotic. The Native peoples of the coast were not happy to give up their homelands, and while they were not willing to commit to widespread violence, many weren’t willing to leave either. Some of those who stayed had partial European ancestry and their legal status was unclear. French colonists, French, British, and American traders, and others of European heritage also lived in the region, having purchased their lands directly from the Native population or under the authority of the French or British regimes before American control was established. Squatters filtered into the region to stake claims before they were allowed to, and regardless of how things were supposed to go, it was the unwritten law that



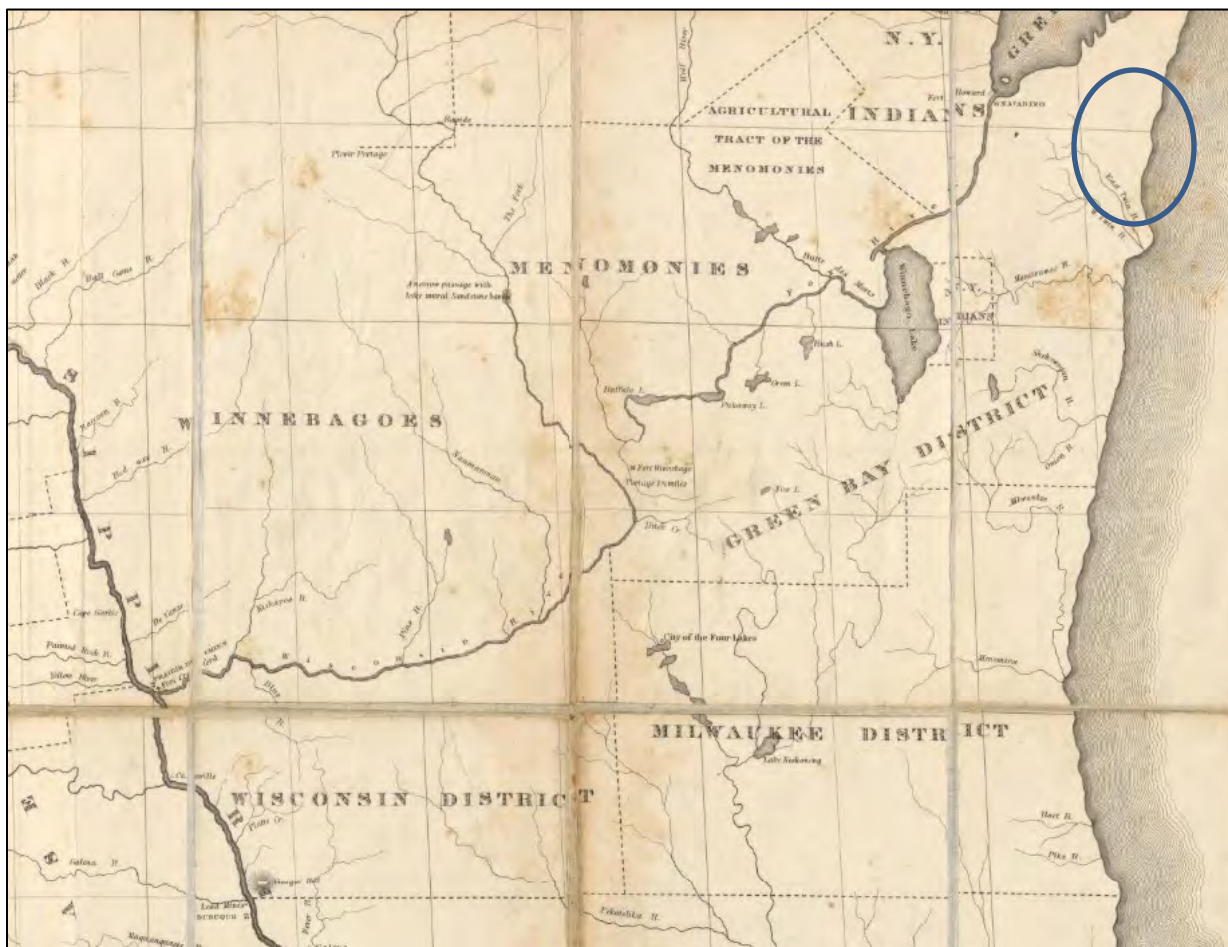


Figure 13: 1834 Map of “Indian Country”, showing initial division of eastern Wisconsin into Milwaukee and Green Bay Districts (Featherstonhaugh 1836). Future Kewaunee County coastline is circled in the upper right.

the claims should be honored provided that the squatter proved up (Western Historical Company 1879:295).

As a first step, pre-emption rights were granted to the non-Natives already resident in the region, and their holdings were surveyed. The remaining Native population was, at least initially, uneasily ignored. As for squatters and new buyers, they were given the ability to legally claim their homesteads at auctions held on pre-announced sale days. Word of the auction date spread quickly through each region, since missing the auction might mean losing an established home. A single bidder handled claims on behalf of the squatters or prior claimants for each township (a thirty-six square mile unit of surveyed land, meant eventually to have its own Town Hall and school), bidding the minimum each time. Any properties left over at the end of the auction were sold on a first-come, first-served basis to speculators and new buyers. Watchers ensured that the bidding was done fairly and that speculators didn't buy lands squatted on or already claimed. Then it was just a matter of being there, putting a name on the bidder's map, and having the money.

The suburbs of the town present the scene of a military camp. The settlers have flocked from far and near. The hotels are thronged to overflowing. Bar-rooms, dining-rooms, and wagons are metamorphosed into bedrooms. Dinners are eaten from a table or a stump, and thirst is quenched from a bar or a brook. The sale being announced from the land office, the township bidder stands near by with the registry-book in hand, in which each settler's name is attached to his respective half or quarter section, and thus he bids off, in the name of the whole township, for each respective claimant. A thousand settlers are standing by, eagerly listening when their quarter shall be called off. The crier passes the well-known numbers; his home is secure. He feels relieved; the litigation of 'claim-jumping' is over forever; he is lord of the soil. With an independent step he walks into the land office, opens the time-worn saddle bags, and counts out the \$200 or \$400, silver and gold, takes his certificate from the General Government and goes away rejoicing (Western Historical Company 1879:296).

### ***"Let them Come"***

In 1839, lands in southeastern Wisconsin opened up for sale. Speculators scooped up thousands of acres—far more than actual settlers claimed—intending to log them off and resell them at inflated prices. Small settlements were set up where rapids and other topographic features permitted, and along waypoints on the Green Bay Road. As a result, the focus of colonization and industrial development within much of the southern coastal region was inland and away from the shoreline (Silldorff 1998; Western Historical Company 1881a). Official settlement north of Two Rivers began in the mid-1850s after the signing of the Treaty of the Wolf River, when lands opened for sale in Kewaunee and Door Counties. Initial settlement there, as in Sheboygan and Manitowoc counties, followed the rivers inland and stretched out along the coast from the port towns.

Wisconsin at that time was a land of many languages and cultures. In 1850, nearly a third of the population hailed from Europe or Canada. The various ethnic groups and nationalities tended to settle in distinct regions (Figure 14). Irish immigrants concentrated along the southern coastline of Lake Michigan, where the larger port cities were establishing themselves. English, Scottish, Welsh, and Cornish immigrants came to the mining lands of southwestern Wisconsin. Scandinavians found homes in the fertile and open savannahs of the south-central part of the state. Canadians tended towards areas of former French/Quebecois settlement, the cities, and the vicinity of Lake Winnebago. Luxembourgers, Belgians, other Irish immigrants, and Germans set up homesteads along the northern and central Lake Michigan coast.

German immigration was particularly varied, a reflection of disparate origins and religious beliefs and the reasons behind immigration. Intellectual and academic-minded "Forty-Eighters" settled in and around Milwaukee after fleeing from German territory for political reasons. Lutherans from northern Germany came seeking religious freedom. Catholic craftsmen left southern Germany when their livelihoods came under fire from mechanization. German-speakers fled the Bohemian forests amidst German-Czech ethnic strife. Germans fanned out across Wisconsin through the 1850s and 1860s, settling in enclaves where German was the primary written and spoken language. Those from Bohemia, used to a forested countryside, were drawn to Kewaunee and Door Counties

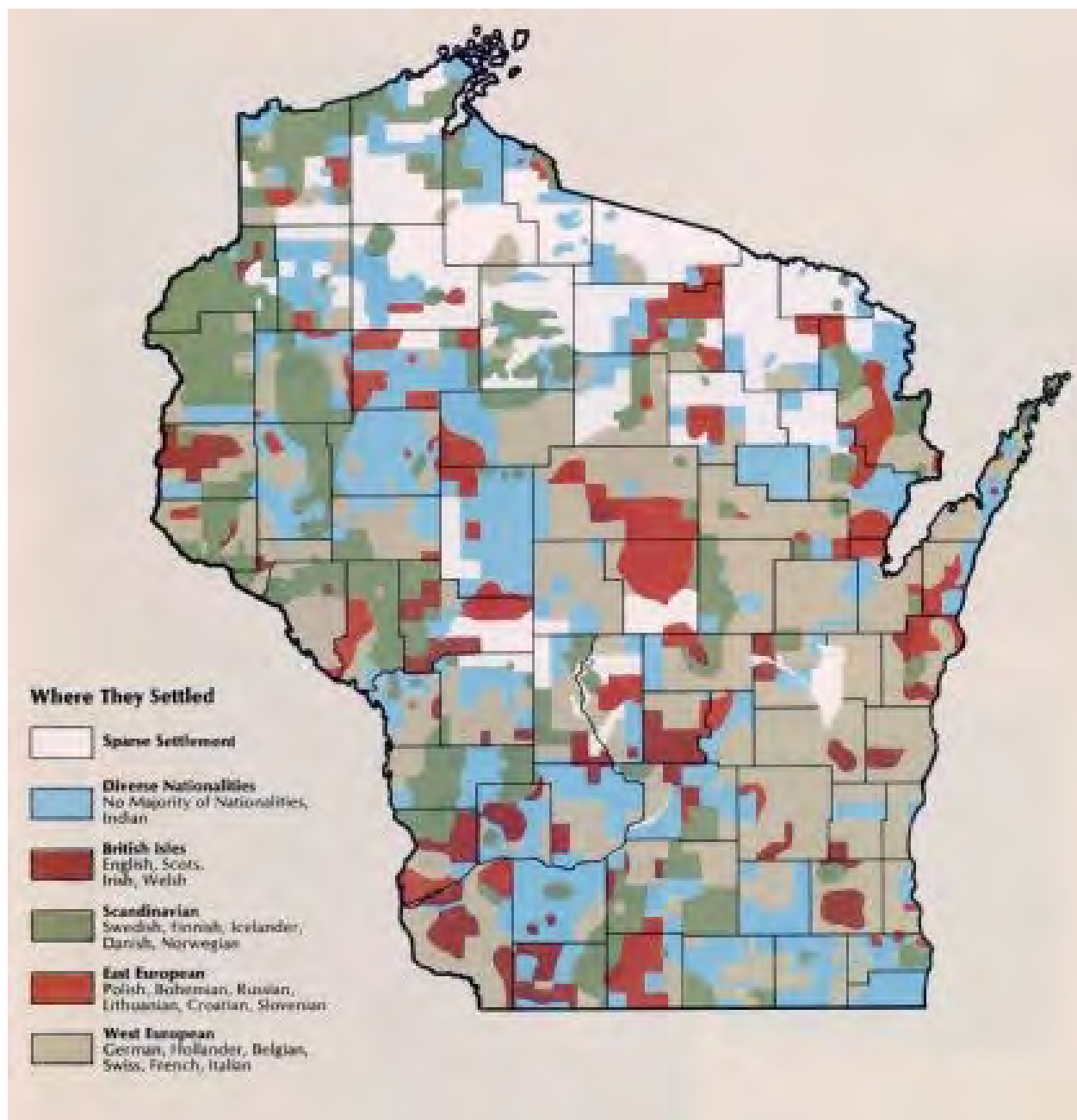


Figure 14: Ethnic settlement in Wisconsin, from the *Milwaukee Journal* (1982) accessed online as Wisconsin Historic Image 121685.

and the pineries of the northern coast (Wyatt 1986). They were joined by Belgians, Czech-speaking Bohemians, Luxembourgers, Yankees, and French-Canadians, each leaving their mark on the placenames of Kewaunee County (Rechcigl, Jr. 2023).

The rapidity with which the lakeshore counties were transformed from forest to farm is astonishing. Between 1847 and 1848, no fewer than 16,225 immigrants stepped onto the piers at Sheboygan. Imports to the same port in 1848 included “vast quantities” of lumber, shingles, cord wood, and other products needed to grow a city, along with hundreds of barrels of pork and

thousands of bushels of wheat (Zillier 1912:140). The other port communities up and down the coast experienced similar booms.

A citizen was asked where all the strangers who were seen about the streets, came from. He replied “They come out of the Pier; quite a number has come from every crib that has been sunk. Planting the cribs is indeed like sowing the fabled Dragon’s teeth, with this difference, that instead of armed men, they spring up monied men” (*Racine Advocate* 1843).

In only four years, between 1855 and 1859, Kewaunee County went from having no public schools to thirty and from four sawmills to eighteen (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1859a). A mere handful of Euro-American residents were present before 1850. Ten years later, the population had risen to over 5,500. Five years more in 1865, and the population was nearly at 7,000, half of whom were foreign-born (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1865b). The correspondents and editors of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* marveled at how quickly one world gave way to another. In 1867, they wrote:

In looking back, we cannot but note with pride the changes that have taken place since we issued the first number of the *Enterprise* [in 1859]. Our County from being new and thinly settled, has become thickly populated with an energetic, enterprising, and industrious class of citizens, and now shows to advantage among the counties along the Lake shore...Broad, cultivated fields now show where then was but an unbroken forest, while the busy whir of mills can be heard, where silence then reigned (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867f).

And again in 1868:

The increase of population has been from 20 to 25 per cent [in the past year], being mostly emigrants from the Old World, the largest number of whom were Bohemians, next Belgians, and some few Germans. In the entire County, the number of American families scarcely exceeds fifty, there probably being less now than there were one year ago...A stranger, unacquainted with the facts, traveling through the County, would not believe it possible to accomplish so much in the short space of from four to nine years. The prosperous condition of the County is mainly owing to the steady perseverance and untiring industry of its inhabitants, who, in seeking new homes, bring with them steady habits, energy, and a determination to succeed... (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868a),

The early colonists welcomed the arriving immigrants with open arms. Every new family represented new neighbors, new workers, new friends, and new hands to open the forests and work the farms.

Still They Come. Emigrants continue to arrive by every Boat, some coming well supplied with money are buying up improved lands and are thus ready to





Figure 15: *Immigrants on the Tuisco, ca. 1856, watercolor by Franz Holzhuber (Wisconsin Historic Image 28043).*

commence life in their new homes under favorable circumstances, others of a poorer class, through the aid of friends, manage to procure unimproved land on time, and thus procure homes for themselves and families, paying for, and improving the same by sober industry and economy. At the rate they have arrived within the past month, our county would soon be well populated (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867h). (Figure 15).

Between 1860 and 1870, Kewaunee County's population doubled, topping 10,000 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870m). Another three years saw the accumulating differences show even more starkly.

...As early as the year 1857, when the county of Kewaunee was first organized, we made frequent trips to the embryo villages of Kewaunee and Ahnapee, through what was then almost unbroken wilderness, over roads that required the whole day to make the passage from Two Rivers to the first-named place, a distance of twenty-four miles... Good, large substantial school houses, with grounds attached, are now more frequent along the whole route from Two Rivers to Sturgeon Bay than were the "clearings" twelve years ago, and these clearings have been multiplied and enlarged till the small patches of wilderness are the

exception, and thrifty, well-cleared and cultivated farms and substantial farm houses, with an occasional successful attempt at a fruit orchard, constitute the general features of the scenery... Besides Saxonburg, Two Creeks, Sand Bay, Kewaunee, and Ahnapee, we found very considerable places growing up at Stony Creeks, Hitt's Mills, and at Tuft's and Horn's, Clay Banks within six miles of Sturgeon Bay, great progress toward building up flourishing villages has already been made. We find, upon comparing views with Mr. Harris and other Sturgeon Bayites, a little disposition to favor a road connecting them with the city of Green Bay, but with these lake shore towns, some of them larger than Sturgeon Bay and all of them destined to grow into sufficient importance to be heard and felt on this question, we have but little fear that the second sober thought of all concerned will [be] when a railroad should be demanded. And we fully believe that the time is close at hand when the business wants of these growing communities *will* demand the road (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873g).

“Let them come. There is room for more, and all are welcome,” said the *Kewaunee Enterprise* (1873h). But the pace of immigration was slowing, and soon much of the county's increase in population was attributable to local births rather than new arrivals. Rather than doubling, the population figures grew by only 50% over the next decade, topping out at just over 15,000. Less than half were foreign-born. 15,778 of the residents were white. Just twenty-eight were Native American (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881c). For the first thirty years of Kewaunee County's existence, 5,000 souls were added to the population total each decade. After 1880, it took 140 years to add 5,000 more. Kewaunee County today is home to just over 20,500 residents.

Most of the early settlers heading for Wisconsin arrived via Chicago or Milwaukee (Figure 16). It was not unusual for families to stop in the cities for a while, getting their bearings and acclimating to the New World (Western Historical Company 1881a:463). Afterwards, early settlers entered “a wilderness without any roads to the ‘cheap lands’ of \$1.25 an acre” (Western Historical Company 1881a:477). Some were lucky enough to arrive after wagon or logging roads were cut. Others followed horse and foot paths established by Native travelers and traders, and still others cut roads themselves.

Settlers also took passage to their new homes on the lake fleet, and the earliest took their first steps in Wisconsin with wet feet. There were no piers and no harbors when the first colonists arrived. Families, belongings, and supplies were shuttled ashore by boat or raft. Lumber and other buoyant building supplies were thrown into the lake from schooners and steamers and allowed to wash in on the waves. The Lanscher, Brey, Drissen, Lehnham, and Van Meverden families took passage from Oak Creek near Milwaukee to the Town of Pierce in Kewaunee County in 1856. They found berth on a schooner under contract to carry tanning bark from the pier at Sandy Bay to Milwaukee and paid the captain the princely sum of \$100 (over \$3,500 in today's currency) to be counted as the vessel's cargo on a return trip north. Upon arrival, they and their belongings were loaded onto the ship's boats and shuttled to a forested beach north of Kewaunee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1909).

Norwegian immigrant Rollef Olsen Oien's experience highlights the disorientation and trepidation felt by many of the incoming settlers. Oien was somewhat familiar with the area, since he had



Figure 16: Milwaukee from the south, ca. 1858, watercolor by Franz Holzhuber (Wisconsin Historic Image 28081).

worked a season at the Sprague mill in Kewaunee County. In 1855, he took passage north from Milwaukee on a schooner, disembarked at Sandy Bay, then walked inland along the Native trail system to the land office in Menasha to claim property. Finding that someone else already owned the parcel he was interested in, he chose a spot west of Sandy Bay at random and trusted in luck to see him through. His next step was to inspect the property in person. Upon following the trail system back to his future home, he stood “dumbfounded” at “an Indian City” (Black Earth Village). To his considerable shock and dismay, he discovered that his new property’s main features were steep slopes, a dense cover of cedar that blocked the sun, and neighbors that terrified him.

Oien’s first instinct was to withdraw his claim. Another Norwegian immigrant who understood the possibilities of his land talked him into staying. Oien had no idea what he was doing. He did not know how to farm the land, how to haul his timber, how to build his cabin, or how to feed his livestock. He returned to Sandy Bay, met with his wife, picked up an ox team, and the couple hauled their possessions overland. The oxen could only go part way due to swampy terrain. The Oiens managed to haul a stove to the cabin with some help, left their main trunk behind on the trail, and carried the belongings they could handle themselves suspended between them on a pole as they waded through the swamps. As they struggled back and forth, the trunk left behind filled with water and animals got into the shanty and ate their provisions (*Skandinaven* 1899).





**Figure 17: Family in front of homestead in cut-over lands in northern Wisconsin, ca. 1895 (Wisconsin Historic Image 94748). Similar homesteads were set up all across Kewaunee County.**

Piers made for smoother landings but could mean longer overland journeys. Even where piers were available, weather and waves did not always cooperate. The Bach and Tischmacher families, immigrants from Bohemia who later managed and then owned Dean's Pier/Carlton, caught passage north from Milwaukee in 1856 on the steamer *Cleveland*. High waves greeted them at Kewaunee. The *Cleveland's* captain decided against trying to tie up alongside the pier. Instead, he continued on his way, rounded the Door Peninsula, called at Green Bay, and then dropped his passengers off on the return trip. The Bohemians, probably heartily sick of the lake at that point, carried their possessions inland along a Potawatomi trail to their home stakes (*Algoma Record* 1915b).

Once ashore, the colonists found they were not as isolated as perhaps they had expected to be. Antoine St. Peter, a fisherman from Quebec, entered southern Kewaunee County in 1851. He and his family came up the coast in a small Mackinaw boat from Two Rivers, with a contract to make shingles for a merchant in Manitowoc. St. Peter landed the boat at Sandy Bay and the family hauled their belongings up the steep lake bluffs. There, in the woods, Antoine, his wife Mary, and their four children settled in for dinner. The land they had chosen for a new home was, unbeknownst to them, also near Black Earth Village. Early that night, a group of curious Potawatomi surrounded them, standing just out of reach of the firelight. St. Peter did not react, but focused on cooking dinner so as to give their new neighbors no reason to fear or attack them. After a short time, the observers left without saying a word (Dopke 2009:16; Wing 1921–1922).

Rollef Olsen Oien, the hapless Norwegian settler mentioned previously, left his wife alone for several days while he went to the lake coast to beg for provisions. His wife nailed their bed across the door in his absence, following a visit from their neighbors at Black Earth village. She laid into her husband furiously when he returned, vowing never to stay alone in the woods again. Three Potawatomi men had come to see who had moved in while she sat scared and abandoned. She yelled at them and threatened them with an axe. They laughed, got a drink of water from a pail outside the cabin, and left (*Skandinaven* 1899).

In the later 1860s, Potawatomi families periodically set up camp where Bradford White established a farm south of the Sandy Bay pier. William Bach, White's grandson, later told of minor run-ins between the new and old residents, the most serious of which involved destruction of a Potawatomi canoe by "mischievous" young settlers. White stepped in and calmed the situation down and peace of a sort was restored (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1933).

As Kewaunee County's population grew, such encounters became rarer and rarer. Kewaunee County was on the verge of a great transformation, disastrous to Native peoples but longed-for by the arriving settlers. The thousands of people stepping into the lake surf from ship's boats, carrying their children down gangplanks onto the piers, and laboriously hauling their possessions along ancient woodland trails hailed from many lands and came from diverse backgrounds. Regardless of their differences, they had one goal in common: clear the trees.

## Chapter Four The Lumber Boom

### *Felling the Forests*

At the beginning of the 1830s, the western Lake Michigan basin was covered with thick forest. Maple and oak glades interspersed with savannah at the southern end of the lake transitioned to thicker canopy further north, then to northern ecosystems dominated by a mix of hardwoods and softwoods (Berton 1996:98). Massive stands of white pine and cedar dominated some regions, creating vast ‘pineries.’ Where drainage was poor, hemlock thrived. To the Native peoples of Wisconsin, these forests were home and shelter and sustenance. To Euro-American merchants and entrepreneurs arriving from the east coast, they were profit for the taking. To the immigrants poised to wash towards Wisconsin’s shores from Europe, they promised both opportunity and backbreaking toil.

The great forests were felled, milled, and shipped south over the next decades—a process made possible by Lake Michigan itself (Figure 18). The lake provided natural harbors where ships could shelter, rivers that carried floating logs to shipping points, and a transportation route to markets and railroads. At the lake’s southern end lay Chicago, one of the busiest shipping ports and largest lumber markets in the world (Berton 1996:98; Karamanski 2000:69).

In southern Wisconsin, the few large coastal timber stands were exhausted quickly. To the north were forests so vast that they seemed inexhaustible. In 1852, a Wisconsin congressman spoke of “interminable forests of pine sufficient to supply all the wants of citizens...for all time to come” (Berton 1996:98; Fries 1951:5). Land speculators, lumber merchants, entrepreneurs, farmers, and lumbermen soon put that boast to the test. Wisconsin’s waterways supplied mill power and transportation. Smaller sailing vessels with shallow drafts loaded in unimproved lake ports, and lumber’s durable nature allowed it to be carried in leaking vessels whose wet holds would have ruined more fragile cargoes. The value of Wisconsin’s lumber industry rose to exceed that of the fur trade and lead mining even before statehood was achieved and stood as Wisconsin’s leading commercial enterprise for many years afterwards (Fries 1951:16; Kreisa 1992:8–1; Lusignan 1986:5–2).

Timber products were valued for a number of reasons, but two in particular drove the pace of timber extraction. One, oddly enough, was the lake trade itself. Early steamships utilized cordwood as fuel, and entrepreneurs sprang forth to supply the needs of passenger and cargo vessels. A large steamer might consume ten acres of forest on a single voyage from the eastern Great Lakes to Chicago (Zaun 1965:61). The other, and more important, long-term driver was a growing demand for lumber for building and infrastructure, whether cut lumber or posts for fences and telegraph poles.

Lumber transport on Lake Michigan began in 1833 when the first lumber schooner arrived in Chicago with a cargo of “white wood” from St. Joseph, Michigan (Karamanski 2000:65). For the first decades of the trade, white pine was the mainstay. Region-wide, the ‘Pineries’ era lasted from



Figure 18: Schooner unloading wood in Milwaukee (Wisconsin Historic Image 122527).

ca. 1835 to 1900. Beginning around 1885, hardwood made up an increasing proportion of the trade, before those stands were logged out as well ca. 1945 (Dunham et al. 2021; Karamanski 2000:65). Just when the transition from pine to hardwood logging took place was dependent on local conditions. In Kewaunee County, it happened in the mid-1870s.

The number of vessels engaged in the Great Lakes lumber trade increased slowly to 50 vessels in 1840, then skyrocketed to over 500 vessels carrying 8,000 cargoes annually by 1885 and the end of the Pineries era (Kreisa 1992:8–3). The southern Great Lakes ports the fleets were based out of had an enormous appetite for building materials and were an important factor in the lumber industry's rapid growth (Kreisa 1992:8–1). In 1860 alone, Milwaukee received 30 billion board feet of lumber. The city increased its consumption to 150 billion board feet by 1897 (Kreisa 1992:8–3). Chicago's trade, however, outclassed every other city on the Great Lakes. Early lumber shipments to Chicago were more than enough to fulfill the city's construction needs. Chicago's strategic location allowed it to move to the next level, evolving into a large-scale lumber wholesaling market that fed lumber and timber products onto the railroad lines to supply communities throughout the Midwest.

In 1848, the Illinois and Michigan Canal opened, connecting Chicago to waterways that flowed through the Mississippi valley and western prairie lands. One year later, the railroad arrived, giving Chicago an unrivaled ability to economically move lumber to the west and south. The successful grain market of the 1850s and 1860s lured farmers to settle the western prairie lands and created a further demand for lumber for houses, barns, and fences. Railcars streamed into Chicago filled with prairie wheat and corn and returned loaded with pine and other timber products—cedar for fence rails and posts, new telegraph poles, dimensioned lumber for building, and new railroad ties (Cooper 1987:51; Fries 1951:81; Karamanski 2000:65–66). By 1856, Chicago was the world's largest lumber market with no less than 12 miles of the Chicago riverfront devoted to lumber docks. By 1860, Chicago was the busiest port on Earth (Berton 1996:102; Karamanski 2000:65–66).

With a heavy dependence on the wind, the Lake Michigan lumber trade was unpredictable, and unfavorable conditions left the southern city markets wanting (Fries 1951:70). Alternatively, it left them inundated in ships and wood.

Jam in Chicago River. The *Journal* of the 10<sup>th</sup> informs us that never since Chicago has been a port of entry has there been so large a number of vessels of all descriptions in port...The river is literally blocked with lumber and coal vessels, which are wedged in so that it is impossible for any sort of a boat or vessel to effect a passage up or down...There are also a large number of lumber vessels, etc. in the main river. There are not less than two hundred and fifty sailing vessels now in port and the *Journal* thinks that if they continue to arrive at the rate they have been coming for forty-eight hours, the river will be entirely obstructed and the commerce of Chicago will be in a pretty predicament. This is likely to be the case, as the wind continues in the Northeast, bringing constant additions to the fleet, and allowing none to depart. It is estimated that there are upwards of 20,000,000 feet of lumber afloat in the river (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1866g).

The amount of lumber that accumulated in Chicago in the few days that it took for the winds to shift, stacked on and within vessels caught in the jam, is sufficient to stretch from New York to Los Angeles, and back to Denver. The magnitude of Lake Michigan's lumber boom is incomprehensible. Between 1863 and 1866 Chicago imported an estimated 600 million board feet of lumber from the forests of Wisconsin and Michigan. An overview of the city's lumber trade written in 1866, the same year as the windstorm, attempted to convey what that figure represented:

Six hundred million feet of lumber would plank a surface...nearly equal to the whole extent of the city of Chicago. It would make a sidewalk four and a half feet wide entirely around the earth! The receipts for the past three years, if composed entirely of boards a foot wide, would, if placed end to end, extend 284,400 miles; far enough to make a bridge to the moon, with 40,000 miles to spare! The whole amount received since 1855 would make a building 100 feet wide, 25 feet high, and long enough to reach from Chicago to San Francisco; a building which would shelter the entire population of Europe. It would make a bridge two miles wide across the lake from Chicago to St. Joseph (Dana 1866:106).

According to the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (1901), between 1840 and 1873 the Wisconsin lumber industry alone harvested a total of 20 billion board feet of pine, and tripled its production to 66 billion board feet between 1873 and 1898 (Grey 1998:43). If lumber coming to Chicago from all corners prior to 1866 was sufficient to build a one-foot-wide pathway to the moon, Wisconsin's production of pine alone between 1840 and 1898 was sufficient to expand that pathway into a bridge over 60 feet wide. Eighty-six billion board feet provides enough wood to circle the earth's equator over 650 times, or to stretch halfway to Mars.

The lumber industry was, however, purely extractive—only capable of producing for a brief period before its resources dried up. The men who ran the lumber markets were well aware that their supplies were not, in fact, “inexhaustible,” and it worried them.

But where is our lumber to come from when all these forests are exhausted? This is a question of grave importance, and one not easily answered. We are yearly consuming the product of scores of square miles of the forest, and on the ground so laid bare no new growth is appearing. We are not only harvesting a crop which has required centuries to mature, but we have planted nothing to supply its place. In our eagerness to supply our own wants, we seem likely to consume the inheritance of posterity...” (Dana 1866:102).

In 1869, 2.75 billion board feet of pine was produced annually by the lake states, increasing to seven billion board feet by 1889, the lumber industry's peak. Soon after, most of Wisconsin and Michigan's accessible pine lands were logged out, and by 1897, most of the forest surrounding the lakes was destroyed by what became known as the Big Cut (Cooper 1987:51; Mansfield 1899:514; Rector 1953:57–60). Technological advances made it possible to strip a 36 square-mile timber berth in a single decade, helping to destroy the pineries in a little more than 50 years (Berton 1996:98–103).





*Figure 19: Men posing next to large stumps in hardwood forest being cleared near Florence, Wisconsin, ca.1895).*

### ***The Lumber Trade***

Lumbermen entered the Green Bay district and felled trees while the forests were still controlled by Native American populations. In the mid-1850s, after Kewaunee and Door Counties were stripped away from Native stewardship, the timber rush began. Kewaunee County was divided between timber interests and settlers, with both contributing to the trade. Adjacent Door County, however, was less conducive to farming. Most of the initial land sales there were to lumber concerns, and for decades the peninsula was seen only as a source of timber. The timber interests came in, cut the most valuable timber out, then sold the land for the cost of taxes to woodchoppers who took the rest for firewood (Figure 19). After the parcel was stripped bare, it was sold at the cost of taxes again to whoever would have it (Holand 1917:84).

Many cities on Lake Michigan's northern shore were created and sustained almost solely by the lumber trade during this period (Holand 1917:84; Karamanski 2000:65). Most served as home ports for one or more vessels of their own, besides being regular stops for contracted vessels or passenger/packet steamers (Karamanski 2000:75). In 1846, the only two mills of considerable size in northeastern Wisconsin were at Green Bay and the mouth of the Menominee River, with an

additional four or five smaller mills scattered throughout the district. By 1854, the district's lumber output reached 137 million board feet annually; by 1865, annual shipments totaled 200 million board feet in addition to shingles and other wood products. By 1871, annual production was on the order of 300 million board feet (Fries 1951:18; Lusignan 1986:5–3).

Life in one of the emerging port communities was a life driven by the seasons. Though timber was cut year-round, logging began in earnest in or around November, after harvests were over and shipping came to an end. Logging gangs headed out into timberlands owned by their employers and set up camps. The first logging outfits were organized and manned primarily by settlers from the East Coast. Their camps were small, with a single log structure that served as both bunkhouse and cookhouse (Dunham et al. 2021:232).

After 1860, the size and complexity of the camps grew along with the size and ethnic diversity of the logging gangs. These later camps might include one or more bunkhouses, a cookhouse, a stable, and possibly store houses and a blacksmith's shop (Dunham et al. 2021:233) (Figure 20). By 1870, lumbering employed a great number of people in the region, mostly immigrants from Bohemia, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Quebec. The industry's success was in part due to the skilled labor supplied by these immigrants (Fries 1951:13). Other woodsmen came to Wisconsin from the lumbering communities of Maine, New York, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania. Advertisements and newspaper articles extolled the 'rare chance' opportunities available in Wisconsin (Fries 1951:14).

By the local end of the Pineries era, the lumber concerns in Kewaunee were sending large forces of jobbers into the pineries. Slauson, Grimmer & Co., the leading lumber producer in Kewaunee, had an estimated 200 jobbers in their employ, and a full workforce of 500. The larger of their camps were home to as many as 30 men, indicating that the firm supported seven or more lumber gangs (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875e, 1875i). Smaller firms and pier managers sometimes employed their own jobbers and teamsters, particularly during the height of the boom, but relied heavily on farmers selling timber to finance their farms.

The work was difficult, grueling, and incredibly dangerous. Axes slipped. Trees fell in unexpected directions or brought limbs from neighboring trees crashing down onto lumberjacks and unwary children watching their fathers work. The brutal cold and cramped living conditions delivered frostbite and disease. Horse teams bolted, rebelled, bit, and kicked. Tons of massive logs were stacked high on the timber sledges and secured with chains (Figure 21). Teamsters and haulers riding on top soon found out if their loads were improperly secured—in ways that mangled, maimed, crushed, and killed. Some haulers fell in front of moving sledges, or tumbled and tangled in their team's reins and suffered a slow death by dragging. In exchange for these risks, the lumbermen walked away with the modern equivalent of \$400 to \$877 in seasonal wages (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873p).

The men worked their way out from their camps in widening circles. They harvested the timberlands and opened vast clearings that grew and merged with farmer's cutovers to expose Kewaunee County's soil to the sky. They cleared and built roads, set up dams, and placed booms along the rivers to keep timber from floating away. Felled trees were stockpiled in the impounded



Figure 20: Interior of lumber camp dining hall, near Alaska Corners, Wisconsin, ca. 1892 (Wisconsin Historic Image 142442).

waters or stacked up on river ice to await the thaw that would carry them downstream to the mills. Alternatively, if no river was handy, the wood was banked up to await transport via sledge.

Though oxen are identified as the most prevalent draft animal in use prior to 1880 in the literature e.g., Dunham et al 2021:238), historic accounts from Kewaunee County suggest early reliance on draft horses. This was to the hauler's benefit, since horses pulled heavier loads. Lake Michigan and company-owned pier farms likely made the difference—the first allowed oats and hay to be easily transported northwards from farms in southeastern Wisconsin, and the latter supplied locally-grown alternatives.

The preeminent concern each winter was ice and snow. If the lake ice arrived early, it blocked the harbors and prevented ships from making crucial supply drops to the stores. Food insecurity was a hovering presence, particularly in remote Door County. In 1856, the settlers at Sturgeon Bay were forced to turn out *en masse* to cut a seventeen-mile road overland to Egg Harbor—the closest point where their supply ships could land—to bring in the winter's provisions (Holand 1916:85). Snow, on the other hand, was very much hoped for and a major topic of speculation. Would there be enough to coat the roads and help the sledges and sleighs glide smoothly? Would it be dry, wet, mealy, gritty, or icy? Would it be too deep, or not deep enough? When conditions were right, the



*Figure 21: Lumbermen at work, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin (Courtesy of the Kewaunee County Historical Society).*

forests began to move. In 1875, the force of 200 jobbers sent into the woods by Slauson, Grimmer & Co. of Kewaunee sent between nine and ten million board feet of wood to Kewaunee harbor's piers for shipping (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875i). In the early years, the atmosphere in the port communities was one of duty and promise—a feeling that the port towns could and should refuel the ships that brought the supplies needed for their survival:

We hope to see the woods alive through the coming winter with men and teams, and that none of our laborers will be compelled to remain idle and live on short allowance for the want of an ax and wood to chop...it seems to be a business particularly suited for the winter months to get out a supply of cord wood for the ensuing summer, and as there is no reasonable doubt but that there will be additional steamboats landing freights here, and obtaining their supplies of wood, we should advise every one who can furnish provisions to employ all the men they can pay to get out a good supply of cord-wood... (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1859g).

The newspapers in those days were full of advertisements from lumber merchants and pier operators, enticing those with wood to bring it to them to sell. Editors exhorted farmers that “now

is the time to bring in all your shingles, grain, and whatever you have to sell, and do up your teaming while...good sleighing holds” (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1861a).

The wood trade was one of the first ways incoming settlers earned income from the forests on the lands they claimed. In the parlance of the time, the settlers “ate it as they went” (Holand 1917:84). If a family was thrifty, every tree that was cut was processed into saleable items. Shingles were a favored product, but posts, staves, and other items were made as well (Figure 22). These objects were produced in bulk by entire families, bundled, and carted to market by sleigh or wagon (Figure Eleven). Each piece represented cash-in-hand or credit at the pier stores. As new immigrants arrived, they joined in as well. An 1862 account in the *Kewaunee Enterprize* expressly called out the contributions of the Belgian immigrants then establishing themselves in the inland regions:

Fine Shingles- Now that it has become good sleighing, we notice that the Belgians residing in different parts of the county, are again bringing their shingles to this market as many of them did last winter. The shingle manufactured by this class of our settlers are a nice, prime, A1 article, and always brings the highest price, being handsomely shaved, neatly and securely bound in quarter bunches, easily handled, and strike the eye of the purchaser at once as a superior article. Let them all come as we believe they can do as well or better here than any other market.

In the same issue of the *Enterprize*, the reporters relayed the news that a quarter-million shingles had arrived in a “general rush of teams” on a single Saturday in January. “Pretty good for Kewaunee,” they said (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1862b). If the values then were similar to those in 1866, each wagon load netted their suppliers between \$18 and \$23—or \$340 to \$430 in modern currency.

Not all families were thrifty, however. Poor (or non-existent) infrastructure and low prices at the shipping points led to a great deal of wastage. Not all the settlers understood the local economy either. Norwegian immigrant Rollef Olsen Oien was appalled at the thick forest cover on his claim and had every intention of abandoning it after visiting for the first time. Another settler, however, gave him a quick education:

“You know what kind of woods this is?”

“No.”

“This woods is cedar.”

“Is that the cedar that they built Jerusalem’s Temple of?”

“Yes.”

“What good can I do with it? There is no market for anything and no road.”

“You can make a lot of money from this woods. You can make ‘shingles,’ shape railroad ‘ties,’ ‘fenceposter’ and ‘telegraphposter’.”

“Where am I going to sell these things? There is no road, nothing to drive with, neither horses nor oxen.”

“You can make a boat. Eight miles to the south is a little town called Mishicot. You can take ‘shingles’ by boat and row down there and get them sold.” (*Skandinaven* 1899).





*Figure 22: Farmer picking up wood, possibly engaged in making shingles (courtesy Kewaunee County Historical Society).*

In 1880, Horn & Joseph at Sherman's Bay in Door County paid settlers 15 cents per cedar tie, four cents per large cedar post, \$2.12 for a cord of sawed maple, and \$3.00 for a cord of hemlock bark. In modern terms, the settlers were getting \$4.40 per tie, just over \$1.10 per large post, \$62.50 per cord of maple, and just under \$88.50 per cord of bark. Given the amount of time, labor, and risk put into chopping, peeling, shaping, bundling, and hauling, it wasn't always worth it. Timber in those conditions was burned or felled and left to rot (Holand 1917:84). On the other hand, the amount of wood that could be gotten out from even a small area was sometimes too tempting to pass up. Captain Charles L. Fellows, owner of the mill and pier at Foscoro, told of cutting a single pine in 1871–1872 that scaled out nearly 10,000 board feet of lumber and a fair number of shingles (*Door County Advocate* 1895b).

Spring was mud season. Snow pack dwindled and unimproved roads degenerated into muck that neither sledge nor wagon could navigate empty, never mind loaded with tons of wood. When temperatures dipped, the roads might freeze well and firm, or into rutted, jagged tortures waiting to shatter wagons and break the legs of horses. In the periods when weather and roads cooperated, the flow of wood to the lakeshore resumed. Once the thaw was well and truly underway, the booms were released and logs flowed down the rivers into the harbor towns. This was a technique denied to the managers and dealers at the smaller ports, which were fed by small, sometime seasonal, streams. Pier communities with no rivers of their own relied on wagon traffic.

The incoming wood was banked up in mill ponds and piled wherever it could be fit (Lusignan 1986:5–6). The amount of wood that built up in the larger coastal ports was a problem. The expanding trade in the Pineries era encompassed cordwood, shingles, tanning bark, railroad ties,



cedar posts, pickets, barrel hoops, staves, poles, and lath in addition to milled lumber. None of the wood could leave town while the lakes were frozen, but nothing stopped more from being brought in. Even after shipping commenced for the year, bottlenecks arose when the size and capacity of the fleet to carry the wood away fell behind the pace of the haulers. Concerns about fire and blocked streets grew. The winter season of 1866 strained tempers in Kewaunee.

Have we a Road Master? If so, why don't he adopt measures to prevent the filling up of the principal streets of the Village with Wood, Bark, Shingles, Ties, Posts, &c. ...we, in common with the citizens of the Village, know of no good reason why the proper authorities should not attend to this matter without further delay (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1866e).

The accumulation of shingles, wood, Posts, Ties and Bark, in this Village last winter, nearly filled the vacant lots and many of the streets in the vicinity of the two Piers, and although the shipments, including the lumber from Kelly, Finley & Co's., mill have averaged over a vessel load a day during the season, yet there seems to be nearly as much of such articles now on hand as at the opening of navigation, showing that a trade of no small magnitude is being done here... What is true of this village, in this respect, is equally true of the Village of Ahnapee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1866f).

Two years later in 1868, the situation remained unchanged. The editors of the *Enterprise* noted that the 1,000 residents of Kewaunee were overwhelmed by wood. Lots were laid out for a population of 10,000, but they expected that Hitchcock & Co., one of the town's major lumber dealers, would fill them all that winter (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868c). Exacerbating things was another issue—sawdust.

Lumberjacks and jobbers emerged from the forests with the spring thaw, returning to their summer lives as farmers, laborers, mill workers, or craftsmen (Lusignan 1986:5–6). The sawmills fired up (Figure 23). Steam whistles sounded to mark the days and the whir and whine of saw blades cutting wood provided background noise (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868f). Improvements in saw technology played an important role in increasing mill output as slower reciprocating saws were replaced by steam-powered circular saws capable of cutting four to six boards at a time (Cooper 1987:51). The air was scented with the fragrance of cut pine, hemlock, and cedar. Fine sawdust blew through the air to coat everything, while coarser waste was carted out of the mills and piled in vast heaps. Kewaunee's waste pile was known as "the Dump". When the Slauson, Grimmer, & Co. mill shut down for good in 1877, the Dump was fifteen to eighteen feet deep and covered an area three-quarters of a mile long and half a mile wide (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877p).

Mill work was no less dangerous than life in the logging camps and on the roads. Many men entered the mills with whole bodies, and left missing various appendages. Some never left alive at all. A scant moment's inattention was deadly. Lathes and rotating axles caught clothing, hair, and limbs; in some cases entangled bodies were spun fast enough to tear them apart. It was the rare mill that did not suffer such accidents. When Kewaunee's mill closed at the end of the 1874 season, they were lauded for their safety record. Despite the fact that the mill produced twelve-



Figure 23: Burmeister sawmill, West Kewaunee, ca. 1880s, Kewaunee County (Courtesy Kewaunee County Historical Society).

million feet of lumber in addition to other products that season “...blood [had] not been drawn upon a single one of the eighty-odd men working in in it...” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874o).

Lake Michigan was generally clear of ice in April, though the shipping season started as early as March in some years. Vessels streamed northwards from winter quarters in the southern cities towards the serried row of bridge piers that extended out from the lake shore (Fries 1951:70) (Figure 24). There, on shore, the pier foremen and mill operators anxiously awaited them. In anticipation of the lumber fleet’s arrival, cargos were ‘piered’—carried out and stacked onto the bridge piers to await loading. The piers were not always in pristine condition, and repairs might be underway even as ships came and went. Storms and ice shoves damaged the piers—sometimes catastrophically—and their upkeep was a constant expense.

Loaders in the larger ports in Kewaunee County received the modern equivalent of approximately \$7.25–\$8.75 per hour, depending on the nature of the product being loaded (*Ahnapee Record* 1882g; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881j). Rates were less at the smaller piers where there were fewer other job opportunities. At least one loading gang attempted to strike for higher pay at the Langworthy pier in 1874 but was unsuccessful. There were always other men looking for work and willing to take what was for offer (*Ahnapee Record* 1874i).

The lumber schooners that carried the wood south varied in size and could transport between 250,000–1,500,000 board feet per trip, depending on the vessel (Lusignan 1986:5–11). The industry saw a shift region-wide to the schooner barge beginning in the late 1860s. The lumber merchants of Buffalo began dismantling sailing ships and towing their converted hulls behind steam tugs in 1861 (Cooper 1987:49; Mansfield 1899:518, 520). Barges of this type carried roughly over three hundred thousand board feet of lumber and a quantity of smaller products like lath (Fries 1951:70). Despite the development of schooner barges, lumber schooners remained operating independently of tows until 1930 and were particularly apt to be associated with smaller pier communities where shipping could be handled by schooners alone (Karamanski 2000:222). By 1884–1885, there were about 500 steamers and schooners on the Great Lakes lumber trade, hauling approximately 8,000 cargoes a year.

The summer months were spent marking and grading wood, milling wood, stockpiling wood, piling wood, loading wood, and watching the wood sail away, then repeating the same steps over and over so long as the weather held. One omnipresent concern was whether the ships would make it safely to their destinations. Lake Michigan's weather is unpredictable, with sudden squalls sweeping over the water and storms far away sending waves rippling down its length. Shoals near the piers posed dangers, as did other ships and the piers themselves if the water was rough enough or visibility poor. Captains didn't always treat aging vessels with the best care. It was a rare community that didn't lose a vessel within sight of the pier, and an even rarer one that didn't see cargoes thrown overboard to save a ship. Quite a few members of the lumber fleet ended their lives as shipwrecks in Wisconsin waters (Kreisa 1992:8–3).

In Chicago, Milwaukee, and the other southern cities the ships that made the trip were greeted by merchants eager to sell on the lumber exchanges. In some cases, the merchants were business partners or part owners of the mill and pier complexes. In others, wholesalers bid on cargoes as they arrived. The wood was sorted at vast lumberyards and distribution points, then either used locally or shipped out by rail (Mansfield 1899).

Chicago's lumber district was located on the south branch of the Chicago River, a route that brought schooners through the city itself. When lake traffic was heavy, the need to keep the swing bridges open snarled terrestrial traffic downtown. Once in the district, ships maneuvered into the rows of slips along the river where they were unloaded and their cargoes stockpiled again.

To form some idea of the extent of the lumber trade in Chicago, let the reader walk up the South Branch, from the Fort Wayne depot to the vicinity of Bridgeport. Up the stream, as far as vessels can make their way, acres of ground on each bank are occupied by lumber yards. Cities and villages are here annually built up and torn down. Narrow streets stretch from the river banks through these yards, lined on each side by stately piles of lumber, shingles and laths, piles towering upwards sometimes as high as 30 feet, and the materials of these solid though unsubstantial edifices last winter were in the trees of the forest, standing in the midst of the wilderness, hundreds of miles from Chicago. And when we reflect that these acres of lumber are not the acquisitions of the whole season, but that the millions of feet which we see are but a fraction of the whole amount received, the balance of which has been consumed in the city or shipped to the

interior, we may form some conception of the magnitude of the trade in this material, which requires a fleet to transport it, an army of men to handle it, and the services of a hundred locomotives and thousands of cars to carry it (Dana 1866:104).

The financial importance of the trade was as immense as its physical scale. In 1865, at the very beginning of the boom, receipts totaled \$110 million dollars “at cargo prices”—the equivalent to two billion dollars today (Dana 1866:107).

Receipts slowed as shipping cleared the northern yards and cold weather and poor sailing sent the fleet back to winter quarters. Kewaunee County’s mills closed down at varying times, but were nearly always dormant by December. Small mills such as McNally’s mill at Sandy Bay only operated in the spring when water levels on the tributary streams were highest. Mills that didn’t take in much wood over the winter might clear their yards and shut down early. The largest ones, particularly at the height of the boom, sometimes ceased operation with stock left in the mill yards. The last part of the year was devoted to maintenance and repair. Potentially explosive steam engines and their boilers had to be kept in good condition, lest disaster strike. Workers sharpened and replaced saw blades and installed and upgraded machinery. The mills were made ready for the next season, while the lumbermen went back to work in the timberlands.

### *Rise and Fall of the Pineries*

Kewaunee County’s first sawmill is believed to be that established by the lumbering firm of Montgomery & Patterson, who began construction of a mill a few miles inland from Kewaunee in 1837. The mill workers were not properly supplied, and their first winter was the last they spent there. In 1843, John Volk came to the place that would become the city of Kewaunee and began work on a mill of his own. One of Volk’s lumber carriers was Abraham Hall, who captained the schooner *Rochester*. In 1852, Hall built a sawmill and general store at the mouth of the Wolf River, at a place later known as Ahnapee and still later as Algoma (HistoryLady 2015). By then, a third mill owned by John McNally and Hugh Ritter stood at the mouth of Fish Creek at Sandy Bay. The next few years saw sawmills established at Carlton and Stony Point, then on the Green Bay shore, followed by mills at the mouths of the smaller streams that fed Lake Michigan in the northern part of the county and along interior waterways.

With the end of the Civil War, the pine boom ramped up. The pages of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* record amounts received, milled, and shipped at Kewaunee that stagger the imagination. At the start of 1867’s milling season the village’s mill banked 15 million feet of logs—enough to stretch between New York and Seattle (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867d). By mid-summer, the same mill was producing 60,000 feet of lumber every day in addition to making shingles and posts (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867g). By mid-November, mill workers had cut 9.5 million feet and produced “a large quantity” of shingles, pickets, and lath (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867k). They ended the year with enough feet of timber still banked in their yards to run the mill for another season without bringing in any new stock at all. The owners had winter contracts to honor, however, and the lumberjacks were hard at work (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868c).

The start of the 1868 milling season began with 25 million feet of timber floating in the river (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868e). At the end of the 1868 season, Kewaunee had shipped over nine million feet of lumber, over 1.6 million feet of lath, nearly 150,000 pickets, nearly seven million shingles, nearly 60,000 railroad ties, just over 125,000 cedar posts, 2,442 cords of wood, and 2,613 cords of bark. When other exports such as wheat, fish, and general merchandise were added in, Kewaunee did the equivalent of over four million dollars worth of business, in modern values (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868b).

Two years later in 1870, the trade was still picking up momentum.

Business in Kewaunee. During the three weeks ending with Saturday, Jan 29<sup>th</sup>, 49,704 railroad ties were bought on the streets by dealers in this village, for which nearly \$9,000 were paid [over \$200,000 today]. Calling 25 ties an average load, would show that 1,988 sleigh loads of ties were brought to town during these three weeks, or over 110 loads per day. And this article is only one item in the business of our village. Other receipts for the same period were 14,715 cedar posts, 781 cords wood, and 425 cords bark, besides grain, shingles, and other miscellaneous truck (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870b).

As 1870 drew to a close, the owners of the pier complexes at Kewaunee, Ahnapee, Dean's Pier/Carlton, Alaska, and Sandy Bay reported in. Together, the five ports shipped over 12 million board feet of lumber, 1.3 million feet of lath, nearly 7.9 million shingles, over 327,000 railroad ties, over 270,000 cedar posts, more than 17,000 cords of wood, over 9,200 cords of bark, more than 4,200 telegraph poles, and 35,000 wooden barrel hoops. To ship these products, Lake Michigan's fleet made 704 trips from the southern end of the lake to Kewaunee County and back again. The accounting reveals some differences between the communities. Kewaunee, as might be expected, milled and shipped the most wood, followed by Ahnapee. Carlton and Alaska did not ship milled lumber, lath, or shingles but focused on railroad ties, cedar posts, cord wood, and tanning bark. Sandy Bay didn't ship cedar posts, but did trade in barrel hoops—a product not made or shipped by the other pier communities that year (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871a).

Back in the woods, the effects of the pine boom were manifesting in dangerous ways. A decade's worth of heavy logging left a blanket of dead branches, bark, splinters, wastage, and sawdust draped over the harvested timberlands. Incoming settlers routinely burned their fields in order to clear the detritus and thin out the brushy growth sprouting in the cutover. In most years, this practice was no more than a nuisance. In the late summer of 1871, things changed. A severe drought set in. Summer temperatures soared. Streams dried, crops withered, and what little moisture was left in the soil evaporated away. The western Great Lakes turned into a tinderbox.

The first fires sprang up near settler's clearings. No-one paid them much mind, but by mid-September they were still spreading and couldn't be ignored any longer. Cinders and burning leaves from distant fires drifted down onto farms and cabins. Fire smoldered unseen through desiccated peat deposits under the earth's surface. Farmers harvesting potatoes pulled them out of the ground already baked (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871p). Normal activities came to a halt as the inland communities focused their attention on keeping the fires at bay. The smoke drifting towards the coast was so dense at times that the choking residents of the lakeports couldn't see across the

street. The lake fleet picked its way carefully through the murk, ships calling to one another with horns and whistle (Wing 1921–1922).

The September 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* carried the headline “Terrible Visitation-Kewaunee County Ablaze.” The columnist, possibly John Whitaker if historian George Wing may be believed, reported that the fires had “burst all bounds.” On Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, a gale blew up and swung around different points of the compass. With most waterways and the soil bone dry, it was disaster. Fires flashed into firestorms and spread both above and below ground, “...through timber and clearing alike, burning up the turf, stubble, potatoes, turnips, etc., roots and all, and converting the entire top soil into ashes and cinders” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q). That weekend, fire was everywhere (Figure 25).

Not a town in the county has come out unscathed, but Ahnapee and Pierce have probably suffered the most severely...we have not the ability to adequately describe the distressing scenes that we witnessed...Of the losses sustained throughout the county we are unable to give a correct statement. But few persons have come to town—all being yet busy watching and fighting their unsubdued enemy...Sunday, the last of the terrible three days, was one of intense anxiety and apprehension. The smoke penetrated every nook and corner, and floated out over the lake like a dense, impenetrable fog...Since Sunday night there has been but little wind; the air has been cool and damp, and the progress of the fire has been stayed for the time being. It has not yet been extinguished, however, and is liable to spread again at any time, with the aid of a favoring wind (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q).

The fires burned through the next week, though they mainly damaged fences and forestland. October brought more wind and by October 4<sup>th</sup> the fires in the northern half of Kewaunee County were “more threatening...than for a week previous” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871r). Visibility dropped to a mile or less in Kewaunee, south of the main blaze. “Large fires” burned west of Dean’s Pier, west of Ahnapee, and in the towns of Pierce and Lincoln. Refugees arrived in Kewaunee, reporting that “the very earth seemed burning up” (*Algoma Record* 1911b). Docked ships were prevented from leaving; there were fears that they might be needed to evacuate Kewaunee’s citizens. The city’s residents packed their belongings or buried them or carried them down to the piers and the water’s edge (Wing 1921–1922). The Kewaunee correspondent reported that “...there has been no rain as yet, and there are no indications of rain” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871r).

The weekend of October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> arrived.

Barns and fences and houses were reported burning everywhere—in Casco, Pierce, Carlton, Franklin, Montpelier, and in the Belgian towns. Great volumes of thick black smoke rolled over the village and shingles and boards as big as a human hand floated through the air, lighting upon houses and barns...No pen can give but a faint conception of the reality. At six o’clock in the evening the fight to save the village seemed hopeless...The schooner *Wayne*, which lay at the south pier, had been kept at her moorings all day, prepared to take refugees





*Figure 25: Settlers fleeing the Peshtigo Fire, known as the Great Fire in Kewaunee County (Harper's Weekly 1871).*

aboard if necessary. The heavens were one red glare and a roaring mass of flames surrounded the village on all but the lake side...About seven o'clock in the evening the writer went down into the village. Pandemonium reigned...Women were shrieking "the world is coming to an end" and running hither and thither...bear, deer and the living things in the woods sought civilized points for safety and mingled with the farm yard stock in confused rout...About eight o'clock an unusual phenomena occurred. The wave currents of air towards the North appeared on fire. The atmosphere seemed saturated with flaming gases which shot in streaks across the heavens. There was an undescrivable roaring. The forests rocked and tossed tumultuously; swirling blasts came from everywhere. This lasted for perhaps ten minutes and then all was over. Eleven hundred human lives in Peshtigo and one-hundred and fifty in Door and Kewaunee counties had perished...Four hundred square miles of territory in Kewaunee and Door counties had been devastated. Immediately following this phenomenon came blessed relief. It rained in torrents. Shouts of joy went up all over the village. No one has ever been able to account for this rain, following as it did almost immediately upon the holocaust of flames, and the first that had fallen in many weeks... (Wing 1921–1922).

In the aftermath, Wing met up with John Whitaker, who lived near Dean's Pier south of Kewaunee. The pair headed north towards Ahnapee and the burnt district.

Not a bridge was left upon the road between Ahnapee and Kewaunee and we drove through ashes everywhere in roads and fields from ten to fifteen inches in depth. The very soil had been consumed. Destroyed houses, devastated fields, and blackened forests were upon every hand while the road sides were strewn with articles of household furniture taken there for safety. At one point, four miles south of Ahnapee, where once had stood a dense forest of hemlock, the blackened trees were piled on upon another to the depth of twenty feet or more, a windfall of impenetrable debris. We mentally thought at the time that it would take at least a thousand years to clear it away... (*Algoma Record* 1911b).

Discouraged men and women sat in groups upon their household furniture piled in the roads; cattle huddled near them; barns were burned, and we progressed further north...At Ahnapee we heard the news. One hundred and fifty people reported dead in Forestville and Brussels; the village of Williamson's mill in Brussels burned with 75 lives; many burned in Red River and Lincoln; not a house left standing in Red River and destitution and starvation facing the survivors everywhere...The roads leading into the Belgian settlement were strewn with dead cattle, carcasses of bear and deer, fragments of vehicles burned to the irons; ditches and cleared fields strewn with smaller game and wild birds, blackened ruin everywhere. We met men with blackened, discouraged faces; women with stunned, despairing eyes—homes, household effects, school houses, churches, everything gone! Some men were taking the bodies of little children from a well, where the unfortunates had sought refuge and even there perished; one family were satisfying their hunger upon the carcass of a burned cow. The same day came the news that Chicago had burned" (Wing 1921–1922:44–47).

The list of property losses is illuminating. Name after name was recorded in the newspapers, with notations of crops lost and buildings burned—and wood products up in flames.

N. Pelnar, Carlton-10 cords bark; Matthias Hansen, Carlton-house and grain; Joseph Mellichor, Carlton-12 cords bark; F. Pelnar, Carlton-about 800 fence posts and some bark and wood; Jehial Warner, Carlton-70 cords bark; Ebenezer Bennett, Carlton-50 cords bark...V. Miller, Pierce-200 ties, M. Kleinbruck, Pierce-4,000 posts, John Waglie, Carlton-150 cords bark... (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871s).

The fire hit before snows fell and the winter's hauling commenced. The county's farmers had carefully stockpiled timber products through the spring, summer, and early fall. Piles of bark, posts, and ties were everywhere. The lists provide a clear look at the true scope of lumbering in Kewaunee County. The lumber gangs weren't the only forces responsible for stripping the land of its trees. Farmers were harvesting heavily as well, and they were doing it in the summer months. The Great Fire tore through Kewaunee County's timber stocks. One might be forgiven for

thinking, like Wing, that the disaster spelled the end. Instead, logging gangs and farmers in the burnt district set to their winter's work with a new urgency.

The scorched trunks of the forest trees must be saved or else their value in lumber will be lost. It is a race with the worm for possession; but as the worm cannot work in the winter, he is likely to come off second best in the strife. Millions of acres are needing, and probably are feeling, the axe. There is no "deep tangled wild wood" in the fire-swept regions. The undergrowth was swept away cleaner than any work of the mower, and little is left of those lately magnificent forests, but charred and limbless shafts and black stumps. ...The scorched logs are literally wealth snatched from the burning, and the lumber product was never more needed than at the present. "Speed the axe" is the earnest wish of all. *Chicago Post* (reprinted *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871w).

Reports of record harvests were soon flowing in. Kewaunee's jobbers scaled 1.2 million feet of logs before the year ended, "...the highest figure ever reached at this time of year" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871w). As the burnt district was explored, it was soon found that not all of the timber had burned. Some stands were unscathed or merely scorched. The southern half of the county was largely spared. There was another unexpected bright spot, spelled out much later by George Wing.

It was thought that nothing would grow from the ashes. It was believed that Kewaunee County would never recover. But the next spring the grass was as green as ever; new trees took root and new life took courage. Our greatest tragedy proved our greatest blessing in disguise. Farms were easily cleared, the ashes were fertilizers; the new houses built with the relief funds were better than the log shacks that preceded them, and our men and women knew the good qualities of their neighbors (Wing 1921–1922:44–47).

Kewaunee's 1873 returns totaled twelve million board feet of lumber, 11 million shingles, 2 million feet of lath, 200,000 cedar posts, 100,000 ties, 9,000 cords of wood, 5,000 cords of bark, and 3,000 telegraph poles—equal in some respects to the total amount shipped by all five ports in 1871 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874o). At the time, the entire population of the village was around 1,100 souls. If they had kept that year's take for themselves, Kewaunee's harvest would have supplied enough ties for a railroad line to Green Bay, and enough telegraph poles to stretch a line from Kewaunee to Minneapolis. The amount of cordwood was enough to heat their homes for years to come, and the lumber, shingles, and lath were sufficient to build seventeen more copies of Kewaunee itself. If the tanning bark had miraculously converted itself into an equal weight of elephants, two-thirds of Kewaunee's residents would have found themselves in possession of very hefty pets.

That level of production was not remotely sustainable. The end of the pineries approached swiftly. Slauson, Grimmer & Co., were the biggest lumbering outfit in the county. The partners, known locally as 'The Company,' owned Kewaunee's mill and were the village's main employer. In the fall of 1873 they dropped the number of jobbers in their employ down to a third of their previous numbers. The men, already in their winter camps by mid-November, were instructed to limit their take to six million feet. That amount would be added to the six million stockpiled "in deep water"

and two more million “above” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873p). Even with that measure the Company estimated that their saleable pine would last no more than two winters, with enough left “to supply the home demand.”

The lumber flowed in too briskly, despite the Company’s intentions.

Business was very lively in our village last week, at times it was nearly impossible for teams to pass each other on Ellis street. Wednesday at noon we counted sixty teams on one street. Mr. Scott says on Friday up to 11 o’clock A. M. he counted one hundred and fifty coming into town all loaded, and there was a large number came in after that. How is that for ‘panicky times’ (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874b)?

By early summer, the Company’s reduced quota was no more than a pipe dream. A million feet were “hung up” on the river. Between nine and ten million feet more came in when the booms were released (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874g). Kewaunee’s final shipments for 1874 were not only higher in number, but in diversity as well—nearly 10 million board feet of lumber, nearly 19 million shingles, 50,979 bundles of lath, 2,308 bundles of pickets, over 55,000 railroad ties, over 71,000 cedar fence posts, over 4,000 cords each of wood and tanning bark, 50,000 oak staves, and 1,683 fish barrels (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875a).

Alarms sounded. The *Green Bay Advocate* warned that the pine in both Kewaunee and Door Counties was nearly exhausted. Over the previous fifteen years Kewaunee County shipped an estimated 200 million feet. Only 25 million was left (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875b). Given that the Company had just harvested nearly 10 million on its own, it was clear what was coming. The Company gave up any pretense of delaying the inevitable. Another 15 million feet was brought to the mills over the winter of 1874–1875. That season the number of jobbers was upped to a record high of 210 men, while another 300 or so worked in the mills and in other positions. Together, they made up a substantial proportion of Kewaunee County’s workforce.

The mill’s owners and Kewaunee’s leaders began making plans for the end, which they forecast for the middle of 1876 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875k). The Company started work on a new hardwood-oriented mill in the interior of the county near Casco (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875n). The era of the pineries was over, and the reign of the hardwoods commenced. As for Kewaunee, if the community’s long run as a lumber manufacturer had to end, it would end with style:

The greatest manufacturing industry of Kewaunee County came to an end last Saturday after a continuance of twenty-three years, when the Company’s mill shut down. “The last log,” which scaled 1,000 feet, was gaily decorated with flags, and evergreens, and ribbons, and it went up the slide amid the booming of cannon and the tooting of the steam whistle, in the presence of nearly all the community (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876p).

A good proportion of that community had just lost their jobs.

Hjalmer Rued Holand, a historian of Door County, noted that the Pineries Era lumber trade was not so much a fount of wealth as a means of survival. He observed that the "... 'royal pine' of Door County has beggared almost every one that touched him" (Holand 1917:157). The immense hauls and sales figures did not equate to immense profit. Labor costs, teamster's wages, and the costs of keeping men and mills and draft animals and equipment going in harsh conditions were not inconsiderable. Low prices paid at the pier yards and the fluctuating lumber market made things worse. In one instance that Holand recorded, a harvest of 74,000 feet of pine brought in only \$111; the equivalent figure today is just over \$4,000. It was not enough, Holand noted, "to pay for the hauling" (1917:156–157).

Once the pine was gone the residents of the northern coast turned to hardwoods. Much of the hardwood timber cut in Wisconsin's interior was wasted—cut down and burned by farmers clearing their fields. There was only so much cordwood that any given region needed or could use before it rotted. But the pier communities had the ability to ship huge quantities to markets that could and would use it, and they did so to the tune of up to six thousand cords per community per year. The lumbermen found that it was more profitable too, despite low prices. The same cordwood trade that sustained the southern Lake Michigan coast in the 1860s thus bolstered the lumber trade of the northern coast in the 1880s and 1890s. Door County was its epicenter, with more than 60 piers shipping cordwood, posts, ties, and tanning bark at the local peak of the Hardwood Era (Holand 1917:157).

Even the hardwoods couldn't keep things going forever. Door County, which had been spared heavy settlement and the land clearance that came along with it, fared the best. To the south in Kewaunee County, takes diminished as early as the mid-1870s. As the *Green Bay Advocate* noted, "the shipment of forest products is falling off somewhat, as the timber is nearly exhausted and the tilling of the soil is now the main business of those owning land" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877d). In 1878, Kewaunee shipped out 115,000 railroad ties, 7,000 cedar posts, 3,100 cords of bark, 1,300 cords of wood, nine million shingles, and 350,000 feet of milled lumber, in addition to a growing array of agricultural products. The worth of the wood products was estimated at the equivalent of 2.2 million dollars in current value (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879a). Compared to 1874's figures, that amount was paltry. Products that required less milling or that could be made by less skilled hands, however, hung on a bit—the amount of railroad ties actually increased and the amount of tanning bark did not drop by much.

Slowly, however, the shipments of wood dwindled, then stopped. By 1900, it was over. The forests that sustained the northern lake counties were gone—and it was felt to be a good thing. Holand summed things up for Door County:

...the pioneer was so accustomed to struggle with his cordwood and ties in the deep snow, and so welcome was the little check he finally received some time the following fall, that he dreaded to think what would become of him when the cordwood would be gone. But fortune did not smile on him until the last stick was cut and the sun came in to make the grass grow for his cows. Then, at last, came prosperity to Door County (Holand 1917:158).

Kewaunee County echoed the sentiment.

The lumber interest has ever since the organization of the county been the most important industry within its borders, and one of the most important agencies in its development. It has been the bridge, so to speak, which has carried hundreds of poor emigrants across the chasm of poverty and placed them in homes of their own. And while the mill has year by year been narrowing the area of the valuable growth of pine with which nature had enriched our county, the sturdy pioneers and later settlers have been opening up farms and widening the area devoted to agriculture. Less than twenty-five years ago the milling interest which has just come to an end here was nearly all there was of civilization in the county. Now it is among the things that were, but are not, and we scarcely miss it (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877p).

Forty years after the Great Fire, writers looked back and found to their amazement that the horrible disaster had been one of the better things to happen to them.

...At the time it was bewailed as a great and irreparable calamity; now it is looked upon as a beneficent dispensation of Providence, brought upon us to dry up the then almost inaccessible swamps, fertilize and loosen up the hard clay soil, destroy the pine and hemlock stumps, and turn the thoughts of the first settlers from timber cutting into the channels of agriculture. It is certain that it advanced agriculture in Kewaunee Co. at least twenty years...It was freely predicted that when the ties and wood had been cut and forwarded to a southern market, and the lumber industry faded away, that the county would revert to a wilderness. Just at the period when the transition took place, or was about to take place, came the Great Fire of 1871 (*Algoma Record* 1911b).

Kewaunee County, and to an extent Door County, traded forest for farm. The sun shone down where the trees had been, the grass grew, and the cows grazed. The forests had gone to Chicago.

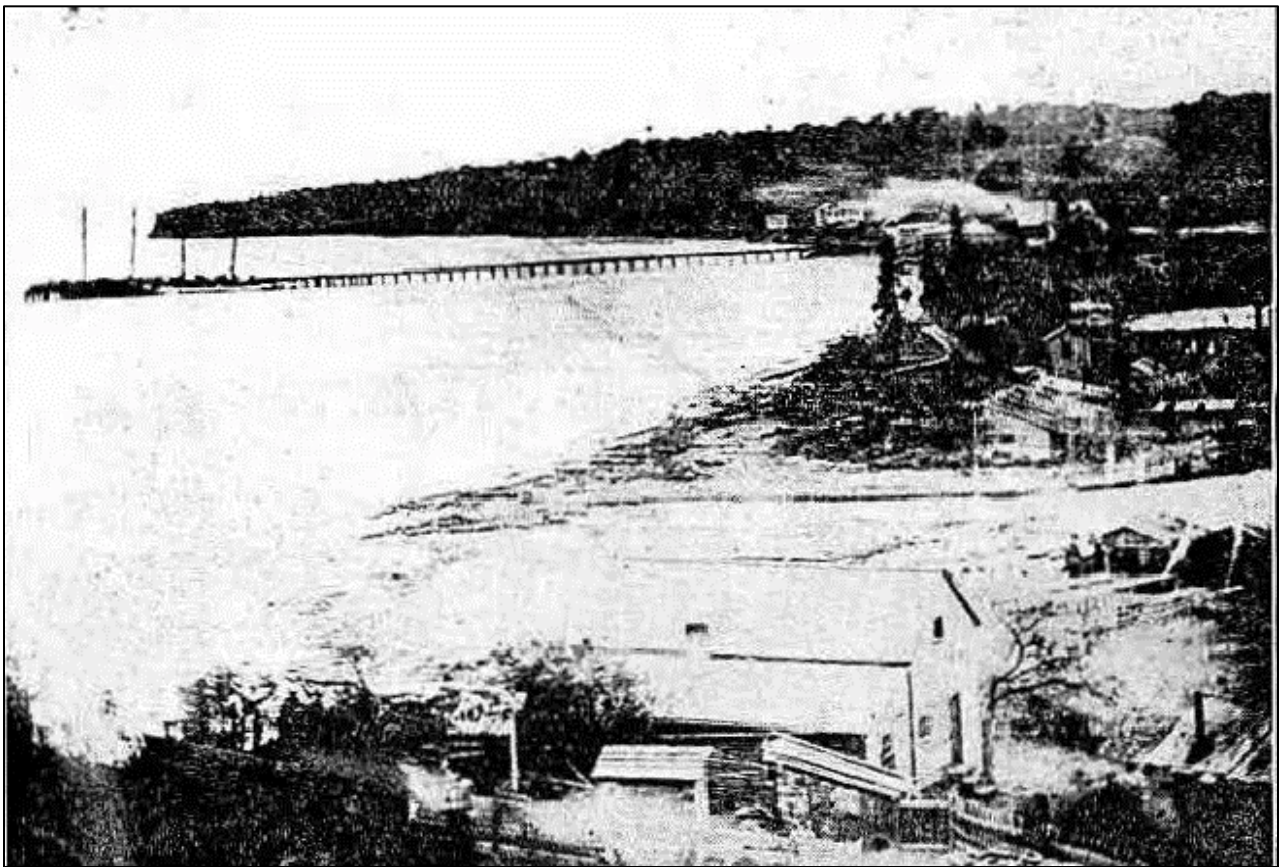


## Chapter Five

### Commerce by Sail and Steam

Colonists, immigrants, lumbermen, and mill owners found that one of their first concerns was shipping and procurement of supplies. Before piers were built, goods were transported to and from shore via keelboat or mackinaw boat, or overland through difficult and seasonally-impassable terrain (e.g., Heuer et al. 2002:68). Prices for transportation of goods were so high that many lumbermen entered into the freighting business themselves, purchasing ships and opening up mercantile stores of their own (Fries 1951:15). John Volk, the man usually credited with founding Kewaunee, took over an abandoned mill at the future city in 1842. In order to ship to Chicago, Volk built his own boat, then made a slow, two-week sail down the coast to market (Linak 1989:8). In 1850–1851, Volk set out to make his life easier by building a pier into the lake where lake schooners could tie up and load his wares (Figure 26).

This was the common origin of the lost lakeshore communities. All of Kewaunee County's ports started out as pier towns. Whether or not they went on to survive and become cities came down to geography. Two large rivers—the Kewaunee and Wolf rivers—enter Lake Michigan within Kewaunee County's boundaries. Kewaunee, as one might expect, sits at the mouth of the



*Figure 26: Kewaunee in 1856. Volk's pier appears in the background, with schooners loading or unloading at the pier (courtesy Kewaunee County Historical Society).*

Kewaunee River. Ahnapee, now known as Algoma, was founded at the mouth of the Wolf River. Both rivers are navigable and have decently large watersheds. Both run deep and fast enough year-round to permit logs to be boomed down throughout the warmer months. Both provided potential harbors of refuge. The economic power and potential that the river ports provided attracted public funding, which in turn attracted shipping, transportation services, and big business, which gave them advantages over pier communities that lacked rivers of their own. This pattern held up and down the Lake Michigan coast, from Ahnapee to Chicago.

The preoccupation of each and every one of the future port cities was their harbor. In their first years, Kewaunee, Ahnapee, and other future port cities were built with lumber and goods floated or lightered ashore from schooners anchored in safer waters. The rivers promised safe harbor, and the ability to bring ships directly to shore, if only the shifting sandbars at the river mouths could be tamed and channels dredged through them. In the interim, bridge piers such as Volk's pier were extended out at each location as soon as practicable.

In 1836, Congress authorized a project to identify and develop a series of Federally funded harbor facilities along Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline. Surveyor J. M. Berrien pinpointed Milwaukee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Racine, and Kenosha as suitable harbor locations. Sheboygan and Manitowoc were called out particularly as having the makings of ports for "first class lake steamers" (*Racine Advocate* 1848). Each location offered a natural port, with relatively unobstructed river mouths emptying into slightly deeper lake bottoms (Jensen and Hartmeyer 2014). Kewaunee and Ahnapee, which were then Potawatomi settlements, were not among the locations chosen initially by Berrien, but public money was funneled their way as their population and economic importance grew (Jensen and Hartmeyer 2014:56).

To make Berrien's proposal a reality, money was needed...lots of it. Appropriations were asked for at every level.

Let, then, the inhabitants of Racine exert themselves now. Let them raise what funds they can. Let the piers be secured, and the harbor dredged out, and they may rest assured the money they expend will be restored to them ten fold...Be up, then, all hands, and stirring, and remember you cannot afford to wait for a harbor. It must be made, and every hour's delay in its construction is an injury to the county, the village, and the commerce of the Lakes (*Racine Advocate* 1846).

Sheboygan made their case to Congress, after "...yards and yards of red tape had been spun by national legislators". In 1849, a committee of Sheboygan merchants sent a desperate plea to Washington, D.C., pointing out "...the astounding fact that every vessel owned at this port had been stranded or wrecked, entailing a loss to the shipping interests approximating the cost of improvements sought" (Zillier 1912:140).

Berrien's proposed design centered on construction of twin crib and piling piers at each harbor, flanking the river mouths—a tried-and-true plan utilized at other ports along the Great Lakes (Jensen and Hartmeyer 2014:46). Navigation lights and lighthouses substituted for natural landmarks. Initial harbor improvements began in 1839 or 1840 at the largest port communities along the southern Lake Michigan coastline, and continued throughout the following decades,

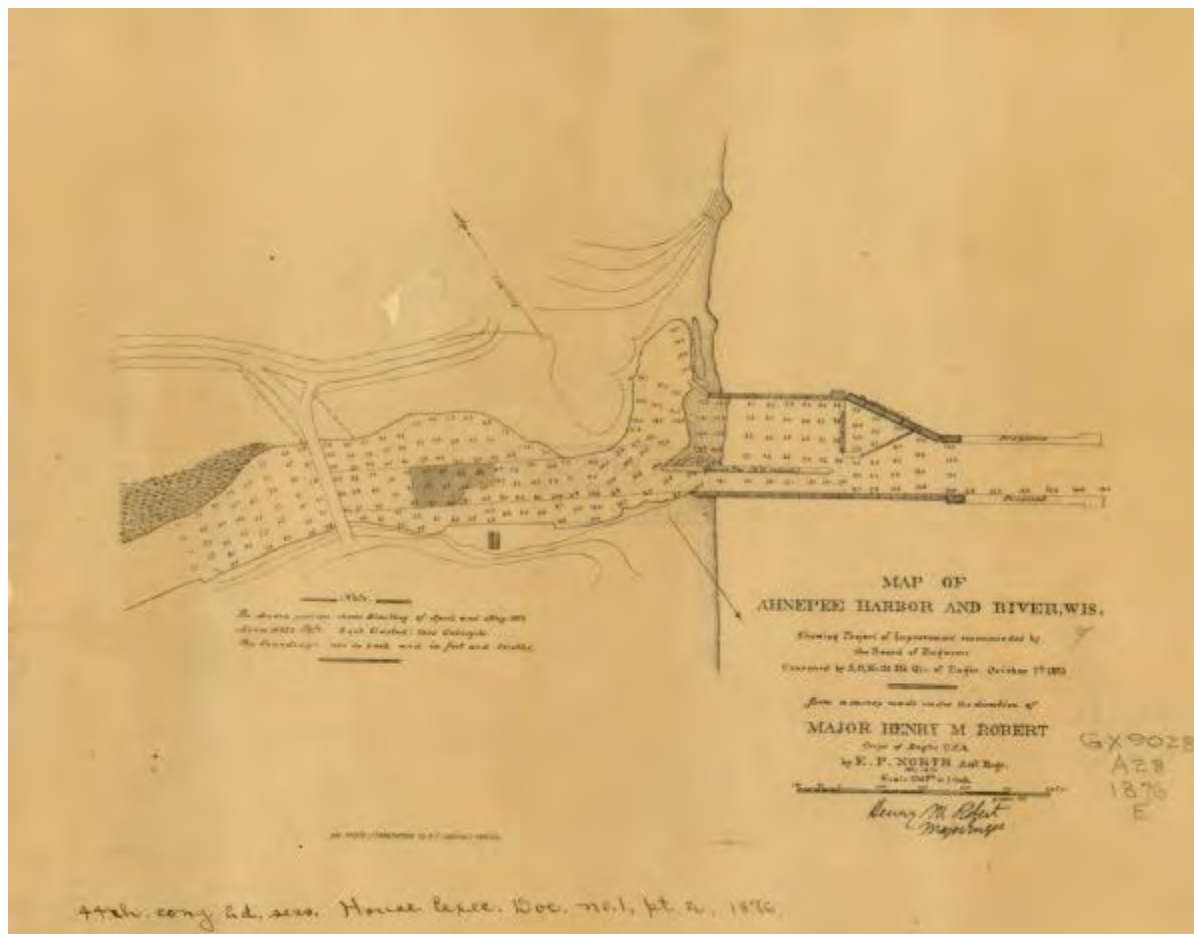


Figure 27: Map of Ahnapee Harbor and River, Wisconsin 1876 (Robert 1876).

supplemented by piers, buoys, and other improvements funded by private capital. Improvements further north had to wait, but Kewaunee and Ahnapee eventually got their harbors as well (Figure 27). The piers constrained the river's outflows, maximizing the force of currents entering the lake and allowing them to scour deeper channels further out into the lake bottom. Despite this, a continuous program of dredging was needed to keep port facilities clear, since the harbor piers tended to trap sediment moving laterally down the shoreline and raise sandbars (Jensen and Hartmeyer 2014).

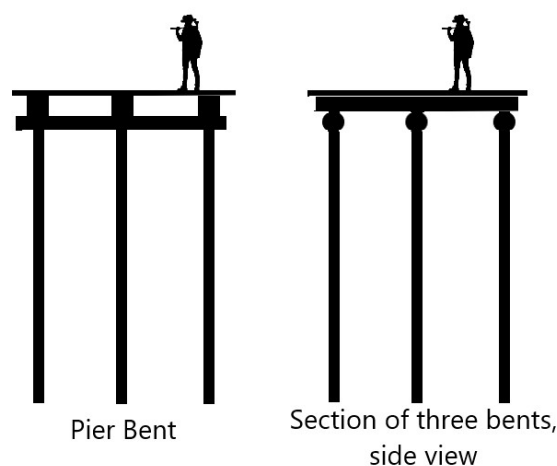
The arrival of the harbors was welcome both to ship's captains and to port city residents. Pier owners enjoyed a monopoly on shipping and had the ability to levy heavy fees. At Ahnapee, by 1874 every cord of lumber or bark put onto the pier was assessed a 50-cent fee, and a 15-cent fee was put onto every barrel or box of bulk freight (\$13.30 and \$3.99 in modern currency). If ships could move inland to unload, the bridge piers and their fees could be bypassed (*Ahnapee Record* 1874c).

### **Bridge Piers**

Once away from the mouths of the larger rivers, the distance between shore and deep water posed obstacles to settlement and shipping. Again, people and goods could be moved by lightering out—

hoisting cargo from small skiffs and barges into the holds of schooners anchored a safe distance offshore (Karamanski 2000:67). Long bridge piers, however, were the best method to move bulk cargo and larger items. Piers constructed all along the coast needed to fulfill similar functions and thus were built in similar ways. An elevated ‘bridge’ portion extended from the shore over the beach before running out into deeper water. The decks were planked and built to hold massive weights. Where schooners tied up, guard piles were driven in to keep ships from banging against and damaging the pier itself. The end of the pier was built wider, so that horse and ox teams had room to turn around. The lengths of the piers varied according to the distance needed to reach safe depths for schooners. The smallest extended hundreds of feet at a minimum and the largest reached lengths of nearly two-thousand feet (Boyd, Leitz, and Weimer 2020:15).

Apart from these commonalities, Lake Michigan’s nineteenth century commercial piers were made in three basic variations: pile piers, crib piers, and causeways. Piers constructed in areas with sandy or muddy bottoms could be of lighter build. Piles were driven into the lake bottom in rows that marched out from the shore. Every so many feet, another row of two, three, four or more piles connected by stringers were put in. Along with their associated frameworks, each row comprised a “bent” (Figures 28 to 30). Decking framework connected the bents and provided support for the decking itself. Some piers, such as the Ronksville pier operated by the Luxemburger Pier Company in Ozaukee County, had iron or wooden rails installed on their decking allowing hand carts to be moved back and forth. Cranes were built where needed, and granaries, warehouses, and shelters sometimes stood at the end of the pier.



*Figure 28: Idealized schematic of a Lake Michigan pile pier. The number of piles in a bent ranged from two to four.*

A more robust technique was crib construction (Figure 31). Cribbs were useful where strong winds and waves were common and where rocky bottoms prevented piles from being used. Cribbs were constructed like log cabins, with roughhewn logs or timbers fitted together into square or rectangular frameworks. The corner construction of the cribbs varied significantly according to the woodworking abilities of their creators. The crib sides were pinned through with alternating iron rods to strengthen them. Cribbing was assembled on shore during winter months and once completed, pulled out onto the ice and placed into position by teams of horses. When spring warmed the air, the structures heated up, the ice melted around them, and they dropped through into place on the lake bottom. Men filled the cribbs with stone moved from shore or brought to the site by ship. The stone fill held the cribbs in place and prevented them from shifting in heavy seas. The pier builders did their best to judge the depth of the water, so as to leave several feet protruding above the surface. If the cribbs dropped too far, extensions were added. When the line of cribbs was complete, heavy planking was used to join them and create a deck platform.



*Figure 29: Idealized side view of a bridge pier, showing high 'bridge' crossing over the beach and linking the main pier to the pier road coming off the lake bluffs. Relative length of pier shortened for purposes of this illustration. Known Lake Michigan commercial piers extended for hundreds of feet, and the largest neared 2,000 feet in length.*

The strongest construction method was the causeway method. These structures were built by setting two parallel rows of piles, strengthening them with timber frameworks, then filling the area between them with stone rubble. Kewaunee's first publicly funded piers, which replaced earlier pile piers, utilized this method, as did some smaller private piers in Door County. The exact requirements needed for a large causeway pier are known, thanks to a letter from Maj. H. M. Robert, the official in charge of Kewaunee's harbor improvements:

Letter from Maj. Robert...The plan...proposes the extension of piers 200 feet apart, from the shore line to about the natural depth of 18 feet...that part of the extension lying between the shore line and the natural depth of 12 feet will consist of modified pile piers, having a length on each side of 1,000 lineal feet...the 2,000



*Figure 30: Pile pier at Centerville, Manitowoc County, Wisconsin (Courtesy Manitowoc County Historical Society). Note cut-off piles from earlier rebuilding episodes.*





*Figure 31: Detail of men building a crib pier, possibly the Ronksville pier. Courtesy Ronk Family.*



linear feet of pile pier would require, as a part of the material for its construction 1,000 piles, each 32 feet in length, 62,000 feet white oak timber, and 1,000 cords of stone for pier filling...Specification...The piles should be of rock elm, Norway pine, or white oak. Their length should be 32 feet, with a mid-length diameter of not less than 12 inches. The piles should be straight and of sound timber. The bark should be removed so as to provide against decay in case the piles are not used at an early date. The white oak timber should consist of the following bill: 2,000 linear feet white oak, 10 x 12. 7,000 lineal feet white oak, 6 x 12. The lengths of the pieces should not be less than 20 feet, or more than 28 feet. The timbers should be free from decay, loose knots, shakes, waness, worm-holes, or other imperfections... (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880n).

It was not unusual for piers of the period to be constructed using some combination of each method.

Piers along the Lake Michigan coastline shared another commonality—they were expensive to build and maintain. Ships crashed against them and sometimes ran straight through them. Waves and ice shoves demolished large sections or periodically swept their decking, support structures, and stockpiles into the lake. Fire was a constant hazard. Piers were built of flammable materials and were weighed down with stockpiles of timber, grain, and other flammable goods, in a landscape prone to wildfires. Busy piers required frequent repair and overhaul to be maintained in good working order, and piers that were not maintained in good order soon were no longer busy at all (Boyd, Leitz, and Weimer 2020).

### ***Pier Stores***

Holand, the historian of Door County, made particular note of the frequency with which lumber concerns failed. It was no way to get rich, in his opinion (Holand 1917). He might have been right regarding the lumber haulers, the settlers selling wood from their home stakes, and independent mill operators. He was not correct, however, in regard to the shipping merchants who owned many of the piers. With skill and luck, they could get quite wealthy indeed.

Each pier was partnered with a general store, which housed an office where forest products were bought and sold. The store was often located at or near the point where the pier's service road met the main road, but was sometimes located at a nearby inland population center. Stores were a crucial part of the economic system that underpinned the lumber trade and its economic successors. At the stores, pier managers bought forest and farm products from the local population and marked up the prices when the items were sold down the line in Milwaukee or Chicago. Payments for products brought in by local farmers and lumber haulers and wages for employees often were disbursed on a weekly, monthly, annual, or seasonal basis instead of a transactional one. Items from the stores could be and were sold on credit, and the cost deducted from the eventual payout. The process benefited residents of the rural areas by giving them relatively convenient access to manufactured goods in a way that accommodated uneven cash flow, while reducing the amount of cash paid out by the pier owners. Lumber bought cheap at the pier was (ideally) sold dearer in Chicago and Milwaukee. The goods bought cheap in the cities were marked

up at the pier store—or alternatively bought so cheap that they could be exchanged for lumber at the piers for a net gain.

Early advertisements in the newspapers (Figure 32) outline the strategy, which was practiced both in the rural pier communities and the larger port cities, very clearly:

Young's Pier, David Young, Proprietor, Does a general commission business. Personally attends to shipping freights. Buys and sells in large or small quantities all kinds of lumber, wood, posts, shingles, bark, telegraph poles, shingle bolts, hides, wheat, corn, oats, beans, barley, butter, and pork. Will spare no pains to render easy and expeditious the landing of freight from steamboats. Keeps on hand good seasoned wood for the use of steamboats and vessels. David Youngs Dealer in dry goods groceries, provisions, boots and shoes, clothing, hay, and feed (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859c).

David McCummins & Brother Have constantly on hand and for sale a well selected stock of foreign and domestic dry goods, groceries, provisions, boots, shoes &c, &c. Sell cheap for cash or exchange for produce, shingles, wood, or bark. Ahnapée (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859c)

Keeping the books balanced required skill, good management, and good luck. The managers at the pier complexes needed enough funds on hand to buy timber and farm products and to pay lumbermen, teamsters, loaders, mill workers, clerks, farmhands, or other employees. During seasons and times when large outlays were expected, such as the end of the logging and harvest

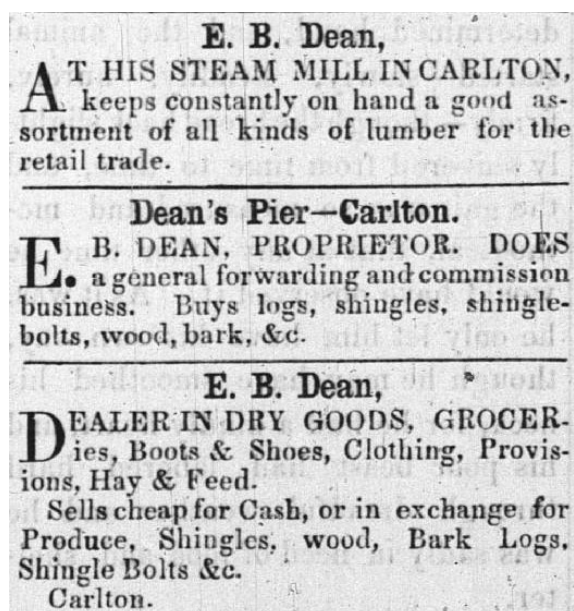


Figure 32: Advertisements for E. B. Dean's pier and store at Carlton (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859c).

seasons or when a pier or mill needed to be repaired, sufficient funds might be hard to find. John J. Borland, an early co-owner of Dean's Pier, helped to persuade lumber merchants in Chicago to adopt the practice of floating loans to pier owners at the beginning of the logging season in order to avoid just those situations (Hotchkiss 1894:176). Of course, if roads, lake, or the economy didn't cooperate, the goods that reached Chicago might not pay off the loan. The owners of the Sprague pier and Silver Creek pier were embroiled in lawsuits that revolved around non-payment of debts. Henry Grimm, owner and operator of Grimm's pier, put his own farm up for sale at least once in order to raise cash. Dean and Borland had portions of the Dean's pier holdings seized and sold off to settle accounts, and the owners of Foscoro were named in multiple lawsuits.

One predictor of success was careful partnership and steady financing. Partnerships that included wealthy merchants or companies brought financing, which

eased problems with cash flow. The most successful pier managers enjoyed good reputations as fair-dealing and honest men. Customers were encouraged to stay loyal through good payouts and a wide selection of goods in the store. William D. Hitchcock, Kewaunee merchant and co-owner of the Alaska pier, sometimes took a strategic loss in order to keep customers coming to his stores and to keep them from selling to competitors: “We notice Hitchcock is at his old tricks again, paying more for Shingles, Ties, Posts, Bark and Wood than he can sell them for in Chicago” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1865d). The managers at Dean’s Pier/Carlton bristled at rumors that other companies were paying more for cream than they were, emphasizing that they paid the highest prices around (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894b).

The range of goods carried at pier stores, both in the port cities and in the rural pier communities, was considerable. The list of goods carried by the Slauson & Co. store in Kewaunee is illustrative:

Slauson’s store in Kewaunee advertises the following: Mulls, muslins, challis, D’Laines, prints, shawls, sheetings, hosiery, gloves, belts, thimbles, horn and ivory combs, bonnets, ribbons, hops, handkerchiefs, thread, needles, scissors, Yankee Notions, coffees, teas, sugars, syrups, oils, spices, saleratus, tobacco, snuff, door locks and latches, butts and screws, planes, various saws, cable, chain, strap, hinges, mill and hand saw files, cut tacks, candle sticks, fry pans, curry combs, shoe, scrub and horse brushes, hammers, chisels, augers, axes, socket lamps, shot, percussion caps, grub hoes, overcoats, business and dress coats, monkey jackets, pants and vests, over shirts, overalls, under shirts, underwear, mittens, cravats, hats, caps, boots, shoes, soup tureens, cups, saucers, plates, tumblers, salts, lamps, etc. (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1860c).

The store at Dean’s Pier/Carlton carried a similar array of items. Newspaper accounts of the Carlton store from the 1870s mention a wide range of goods, including clothing for men, women, and children, jewelry, watches, mirrors, horse blankets and tack, molasses, kerosene, and oils (e.g. *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877k, 1878w). In 1910, when the Carlton store was liquidated following the final owner’s bankruptcy, the sale ads listed numerous items of clothing, from mittens to men’s golf shirts to hose to wool fascinators, as well as boots and shoes, matches, sewing supplies, cloth and linens, paint, buggy whips, gardening and farming tools, axle grease, washing powder and soap, sugar, salt and spices, oats, Alaskan salmon, tea and coffee, canned goods, chocolate, and cookware (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1910c). Hitchcock’s store in Kewaunee sold plows, and it is likely that all of the stores sold farming and logging equipment (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1860i). The Carlton store sold high-quality seed, gleaned from stock planted at the manager’s show farm (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871m).

Resupply was a perennial problem for the earliest colonists and immigrants to Kewaunee County and neighboring regions. With no swift means of overland travel, the pier store was a lifeline. Store owners arranged to have a full stock of goods delivered each fall before Lake Michigan iced over and lake travel came to a halt, and they resupplied again as quickly as possible in the spring. “The steamers which have arrived lately have come loaded down to the guards with winter goods for our merchants,” observed the *Kewaunee Enterprise* in November of 1874, “Messrs. Slauson, Grimmer & Co., Hitchcock & Mashek, Joseph Walender and Darbellay & Co., have all got in

heavy stocks, which they will dispose of at hard-times prices” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874q). Even so, pickings often were slim before spring arrived (e.g., *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870c).

### ***Pleasant Little Hamlets”***

The smallest rural ports in Kewaunee County, like Grimm’s Pier, never grew much beyond the pier, pier store, and owner’s farmstead. The largest were briefly small villages in their own right. All served a rural populace that extended well beyond the limits of the pier and store complex. The ability of the pier complexes to grow and survive was determined by their ability to employ workers, who in turn brought families, established homes and farms, and attracted services. Mills and shipping were the life blood of the rural pier communities, for the simple reason that they required at least small workforces to be successful. The available replacement economies—farming, herding, and dairy—weren’t capable of supporting the same population. The end of the lumber boom signaled the beginning of the end of most rural port communities, as workers and residents drifted away.

The range of jobs available at a rural port was considerable. Kewaunee County’s pier complexes employed haulers and teamsters, loaders, millwrights, mechanics, blacksmiths, wagon-makers, sawyers, choppers, carpenters, loaders, farmhands, tenant farmers, shepherds, ship’s captains, sailors, shipwrights, hostellers, servants, cooks, foremen/managers, clerks, telegraph operators, postal carriers, and bookkeepers. Jobs were also available in the small service industries that sprouted at the larger complexes. Employment as a schoolteacher, tavern keeper, bartender, barmaid, dancer, innkeeper, or custodian, was available in some communities.

To the rural population, rural ports were not just employers and places of resupply. They were markets, social hubs, and portals to the wider world. Pier owners didn’t just buy wood products, they bought farm produce as well. The merchants in the harbor town of Kewaunee boasted that they had the best agricultural shipping facilities around in 1879, stating that the farmers “within hauling distance of Kewaunee now realize that Kewaunee is the place to haul to” since they would be paid cash at the time of sale (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879p). Managers at the rural ports disagreed and did their best to compete. The owners of the Carlton pier built a two-story granary at their complex in 1870 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870l). Later owners of the Carlton store advertised that they would buy eggs and chickens (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903f). Foscoro put in a hay scale for their customer’s use.

Visitors came to the pier complexes to sell barley and wheat, cream and eggs, hay and other fruits of the farm. They also came to have their grain milled into flour, their timber cut into lumber and shingles for new homes, to buy new wagons, and have new horseshoes made. Several of the rural ports had operating gristmills. Most, if not all, had blacksmiths. Carlton’s wagon shop was famous for the high quality of the wagons produced and sold.

At the rural port communities, local residents picked up and dropped off mail and packages and corresponded with far away friends and relatives via telegraph (and later telephone). Not all of those who sought the services of the telegraph office came from the landward side of the complex. Just as 20<sup>th</sup> century travelers on the road once asked to use the phones of gas stations to call for

tows, so did Lake Michigan's 19<sup>th</sup> century lake captains trudge up from the beaches and piers from time to time to call for tugs when their vessels sank or stranded.

Visitors from both land and lake came looking for rest and refreshment. Foscoro had the Foscoro House—a combination hotel, saloon, and dance hall. Sandy Bay is rumored to have had a tavern, and there are indications that Dean's Pier might have had one early on although the community's later iteration as Carlton was dry. Sandy Bay had a small hotel/boarding house while Dean's Pier had an inn and boarding house prior to an 1864 fire and a hotel somewhat inland after the community was renamed 'Carlton'. The stores doubled as gathering places too, as at Carlton where Ed Bach gave lectures and hosted conversations about new agricultural techniques.

## ***Ships and Shipping***

The most valuable service that the pier complexes provided was transportation. Immigrants took passage on ships heading north and landed at the rural piers closest to their new home stakes (e.g., *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c). Similarly, passengers bought their way onto lumber or cargo ships heading south, if there was sufficient room, or purchased tickets for steamers on the Goodrich line. After the railroad made its way to Green Bay in the 1860s, travelers in Kewaunee County had the option of making the trip west to the Green Bay station, but lake travel was preferable to the approximately 60-mile round-trip journey over rough roads. The arrival of the first Goodrich passenger steamer of the year was always cause for celebration:

First Boat- Our old favorite, the steamer *Comet* [Figure 33], Capt. Morgan, came in on Saturday, for the first time this season, bringing lots of freights and passengers. She went on North and served Ahnapee in the same manner, and returning made another call taking away a large number of passengers and some freight. The *Comet* is looking as good as new, and her officers all have the same jolly faces they used to wear...Success to the *Comet*, and goodbye Green Bay and Western R.R. until next winter (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1864a).

The largest rural port communities, such as Carlton, became stops on the Goodrich line. The Goodrich steamers handled the bulk of Lake Michigan's passenger and packet trade, carrying a variety of cargoes:

The Propellor *Trucsdell*, Capt. C. E. Kirkland, of Goodrich Line, came here from Milwaukee last Thursday, having on board about thirty-five tons of freight for the merchants of this place [Kewaunee], and took back three hundred thousand shingles, purchased by Capt. Goodrich of Dikeman & Latimer (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868d).

The range of materials carried by the lake fleet was as varied as one might expect—all of the products of forest and farm, plus all of the products needed or wanted by growing communities. On September 14, 1859, just a few years after official settlement of Kewaunee County commenced, the weekly list of goods arriving at Kewaunee's piers included beer, flour, tobacco, coffee, sole leather, matches, saw blades, meal, sugar, wagons, butter, oil, iron, beef, bricks, hay, oats, pork, lime, cradles, powder, and nails. In return, Kewaunee shipped lumber, timber, bolts,



Figure 33: The Goodrich steamer Comet, a beloved passenger and packet carrier of Lake Michigan. Image from *Historical Collections of the Great Lakes*, Bowling Green State University.

lath, shingles, fish oil, and passengers (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859e). In March of 1860, the schooner *Rambler* docked at Kewaunee to drop off provisions for the owners of the largest logging and milling outfit in the county, including beef, pork, flour, and feed, and an entire siding mill (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1860b).

Bulk items such as timber products and grain were usually carried by schooners and scow schooners. Scows, with their flat bottoms, were able to move closer to the shore and into shallower coastal waters. Their configuration made them less susceptible to damage if they ran onto shoals or on the beach. Older vessels were specifically chosen for the lumber trade. They were relatively cheap, had shallower drafts, and if water got into their holds the lumber they carried wouldn't be ruined. It also was thought that the wood would help them stay afloat if they started to leak (Galloway et al. 2020; Meverden and Thomsen 2005, 2007:5).

Many a lumber schooner went down despite that theory. The ships were often overloaded—with full holds and great stacks of timber and lumber on their decks (Figure 34). The shallow water and shoals around the piers posed hazards; when waves rose up, ships near the shore were in danger of dropping onto submerged boulders or striking bottom in the wave troughs, stoving in hulls or opening seams. The nearness of the coast provided no room for error. When a mechanical failure or human error left a ship casting off from the pier adrift, the waves pushed it onto the beach.

Steam tugs were the tow trucks of the day. They arrived in the aftermath of beachings and strandings to free stricken vessels, or at least to salvage what they could from them. Their first order of business was usually to throw the ship's deck load and cargo overboard to see if the vessel would float off on its own when it was lighter. Their next was to try to pump the vessel out and/or dredge around it. Vessels that couldn't be refloated were stripped of rigging, spars, machinery, and any other parts that could be removed, and then allowed to break up in the surf. Tugs also pulled





*Figure 34: A heavily-laden lumber schooner being towed by a tug at the confluence of the Milwaukee and Menominee Rivers, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Photograph taken by H. H. Bennett, ca. 1885. Wisconsin Historic Image 5399.*

scow barges from port to port, much as tugboats shepherd coal and grain containers on rivers today. A number of tugs are listed in connection with the pier communities, summoned after vessels went down, including the *G. W. Tift*, the *Kitty Smoke*, the *Union*, the *B. B. Coe*, and the *Thomas Spears*. The latter vessel sank at Sandy Bay after catching fire.

Smaller amounts of wood and other freight (and most passengers) traveled by steamer. Steamers took over the lake trade in the aftermath of the lumber boom. The ships were more reliable, and handled themselves better in rough weather (Meverden and Thomsen 2007). The Goodrich steamer *De Pere* picked up and delivered a good deal of Carlton's freight as the community transitioned to a mercantile and cheese-based economy. The steam barges *Grace Williams*, *C. P. Heath*, and *D. W. Powers* are also mentioned in connection with Carlton in the 1880s, picking up loads of wood for delivery south. The last cargo ever shipped from Carlton's pier was picked up by the steam barge *Pauly* in 1893.

The owners and managers of Kewaunee County's piers interacted with the lake fleet in a number of ways. Ships were hired on a cargo-by-cargo basis or sent north by buyers or dealers in Chicago to pick up orders. Pier managers and owners sometimes contracted with ship's captains to carry for them for an entire season. Wealthier or less debt-averse owners purchased their own ships, much as Paul and Nicholas Ronk bought the *Northerner* to carry for Ronk's pier.

### ***Making a Difference***

The rural pier communities even had the power to change regional economies. In the mid-1870s, the owners of Dean's Pier/Carlton—after much investigation—decided that dairy represented the best alternative to the lumber industry. They duly acquired a dairy herd for their show farm, built a cheese factory (later expanded to include a creamery for butter manufacture), and advertised that they would pay for milk and cream. The local farmers responded by expanding their own dairy herds, which of course increased the supply coming into Carlton and boosted Carlton's fortunes. Carlton's success spurred the owners of other pier communities and inland mill towns to establish cheese factories of their own (sometimes belatedly), which encouraged Kewaunee County's farmers to expand their dairying operations even further. The trend did not go unnoticed by the press:

One cheese factory [*Carlton*] has been in successful operation in Kewaunee County for three or four years past, and two others are now being established [*town of Pierce, another near Kewaunee*]. The subject of dairy farming is attracting some attention in other parts of the county, but we believe is not receiving the thoughtful consideration to which its importance entitles it. The lake shore counties of Wisconsin, in an especial degree, possess all the conditions necessary for the manufacture of first-class butter and cheese at a minimum cost, and this fact has been notably demonstrated in the case of Sheboygan County...Some of the counties have almost entirely discarded wheat as the principal crop, and the cow has taken the place of the plow (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878).

Carlton's cheese factory pumped the 1870s equivalent of hundreds of thousands of dollars back into the local community over its lifetime. They paid out the equivalent of \$75,000 in 1877 and

\$198,000 in 1878, as a start (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877bb, 1878v). When all other areas of the Carlton complex were razed or in ruins, the cheese factory was still making cheddar.

### ***The Coming of the Railroad***

The railroad gave the *coup de grace* to the few pier communities still functioning as commercial centers after the lumber boom. Trains carried freight in all kinds of weather, year-round. The railroad reached Green Bay by the mid-1860s and was always an alternative for passenger traffic and freight, even if people were unhappy with the long commute to the train station. The managers of the Dean's Pier/Carlton complex used rail to ship their sawmill when they decided they no longer needed it, first hauling the components the 30 miles overland by wagon. People and items onboard the train at Green Bay in the morning arrived in Chicago in the evening. The harbor towns, assured that maritime traffic would continue for them even if it did diminish, looked forward to the railroad's coming. The rural coastal areas did not.

The argument for the railroad was made, at length and on multiple occasions, by Edward Decker and others on the pages of the *Kewaunee Enterprise*.

We Must Not Sit Still Until Our Trade Is Cut Off...If the road mentioned is built where it is now being located, namely, through the center of Casco and Lincoln, and thence northward to Sturgeon Bay, it will cut off a great portion of the best trade of Kewaunee....Our territory is already very limited—east of us we have the Lake—west of us a distance of twelve miles we divide the trade with Green Bay, south of us a distance of six or eight miles we divide with Manitowoc, north of us a distance of six miles we divide with Ahnapee—that is about the state of affairs at the present time, certainly not very encouraging. Now if this proposed road runs within twelve or thirteen miles West of us, our trade from the West will be almost entirely cut off, for a railroad there means Green Bay prices for grain anywhere on the route, and with a shorter haul we cannot expect the farmers from that direction to bring their grain here for market. It will not do for us to say that we have Lake Michigan for a highway and that we can compete with Green Bay and Manitowoc because of this. The truth is we have had the lake always, but it is nevertheless a fact that we do not compete with those places, and we never can until we have a railroad...The produce bought to-day can be marketed to-morrow, instead of being held until a vessel cargo is obtained, which sometimes takes a long time. Thus the operator realizes on his investments quicker, and can do business on a much smaller margin, and can in turn pay the farmer better prices than can possibly be done now. Besides this, a railroad would open a market for the small products of the farm—eggs, butter and cheese, poultry, potatoes, etc., etc.,—products that...are infinitely more profitable to the farmer than grain...(Kewaunee Enterprise 1881d).

In 1885, a vote was held on a proposal to extend the railroad to Kewaunee, and from there to Ahnapee. The village of Ahnapee, West Kewaunee Township, and the village of Kewaunee voted heavily in favor, with favorable margins in Ahnapee Township. Carlton, Franklin, Pierce, and Montpelier Townships voted heavily against. Casco's view on the matter was split. When the

railroad did arrive, just as the townships that voted against predicted, lake traffic diminished and rural commerce and services suffered. The abandoned piers of rural Kewaunee County fell apart under the assaults of lake ice, waves, and neglect, and their stores stood silent and empty. The rural ports of Kewaunee County were lost.

## Chapter Six

### Family Matters: Dean's Pier/Carlton

Modern travelers driving down Lake Shore Road south of Kewaunee don't give much thought to the unremarkable bridge between Lake and Old Settler's roads, other than to take care as the road narrows. Trees and brush obscure the deep ravine beneath and block the view of Lake Michigan's level horizon to the east. Once past the bridge, traveling in either direction, the surrounding landscape is one of big skies and peaceful farms. From higher points along the road, one can see the tops of grain silos miles away, standing tall alongside substantial dairy barns and farmhouses built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the early 1800s, the wide-open skies were the sole possession of Lake Michigan. A green canopy of hemlock, fir, beech, sugar maple, pine, and cedar covered the land, broken only where marsh and swamp prevailed. Instead of the road, a foot and horse trail wound through the forest, down into the ravine and back out again. At either end of the trail lay the Potawatomi settlements and fishing grounds of Kewaunee and Ahnapee. One might guess that this story—of a quiet path that became a quiet road—is all there is to tell. That guess, however, would be very wrong. The brush, which flushes violet with the pale blossoms of ancient lilac bushes in the spring, provides a soft hint of what once happened here.

This stretch of road once saw bustling activity. Lumber sleds glided by on crystalline winter days, the heavy breathing of the draft horses pulling them sending clouds of steam into the frigid air. Summer warmth brought rumbling wagons and rattling metal cans of milk and cream. The sounds of explosions, curses, and laughter rang through the air, intermixed with splashes and the hiss of steam. New parents sang lullabies to their babies. Spirited debate spilled out of open windows in the evening twilight, and dutiful watchdogs barked in the night. Clanging bells and shrieking steam whistles called farmers away from their chores. Women chatted merrily, exchanging the latest news while admiring purchases newly made. Horse teams galloped northwards, carrying boys to catch steamships. At the heart of it all were a pier, a store, and a cheese factory (Figure 35).

#### ***Arrivals: Dean & Borland, 1852–1864***

##### *From Omro and Bohemia to Carlton*

In 1835, U. S. Government survey teams worked their way along the Kewaunee County shore, subdividing Menomoni and Potawatomi land into square-mile Sections and smaller Lots. When the surveyors arrived at the quiet stretch of lakeshore where the road and bridge would one day stand, they took note of the trail, the stream, the high bluffs, and the timber that covered it all. They called the land “second rate” (Hathway 1835a). Their map and notes were dutifully copied and sent to the local Land Offices, to be pored over by colonists, speculators, and immigrants newly-arrived.

Elisha B. Dean, a young Yankee schoolteacher from New York, was one such party. He was later described as looking more like a minister than a teacher—tall and slender, with dark hair and

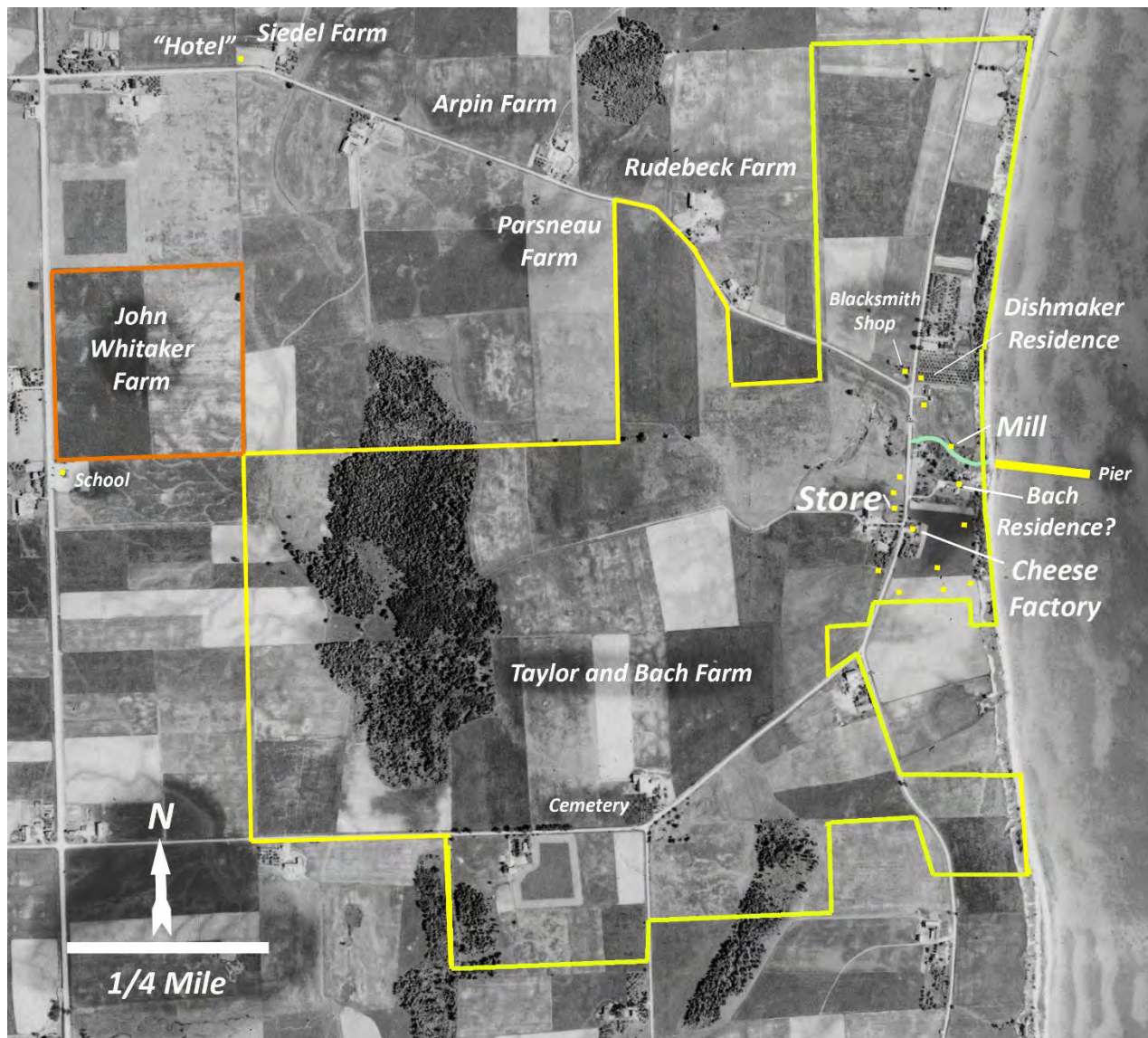
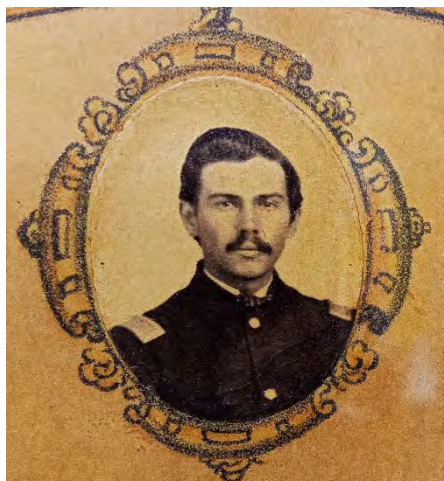


Figure 35: Dean's Pier/Carlton, showing location of complex buildings inferred from historic maps, pier and pier road, extent of Taylor & Bach show farm, and other relevant features, superimposed on 1938 (USDA) aerial photo.

mustache (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c). His future lay not in schoolbooks or the pulpit, but in the forested lands. Dean came to Wisconsin in 1848, settling originally at Oshkosh. While in Oshkosh, Dean heard of a man named David Humes who was building a lumber town along the Fox River and sought men to help. Dean heeded the call.

Prior to Dean's arrival, Humes' son-in-law Nelson Beckwith struck a deal to build a sawmill for Humes in exchange for property along the river. Elisha Dean made a similar offer to Humes but was rebuffed. He responded by partnering with fellow New Yorker Joel Vissivius Taylor and approaching the community's pastor, Theodore Pillsbury, who also owned riverfront property. Dean and Taylor got 40 acres out of their bargain, and interest in the mill. Beckwith, Dean, and





*Figure 36: John J. Borland; detail of Civil War roster in holdings of Kewaunee County Historical Society.*

Taylor then set about platting the little village that would become Omro, Wisconsin (Smith 1976:37, 113; *Omro Herald* 1939; *Omro Union* 1866). One apocryphal and certainly false account credits Dean and Taylor with Omro's name, supposedly created by pulling random letters out of a hat (Smith 1976:33)

As a result of his efforts, Dean—and his parents, who were with him by 1850—acquired a new home, partial ownership in a sawmill, and title to numerous village lots (Smith 1976:92). In 1853, Dean married fellow Omro settler Jeannette Wilcox. At about the same time, he reached out to his 18-year-old cousin John J. Borland with a proposition (Figure 36). Borland, a young man of quick wits and kind nature, had recently completed a cattle drive with his father, and presumably had both cash and a desire for further opportunity. With the young Borland's cattle profits supplementing Dean's capital, the cousins set about planning a lumber town of their own (*Chicago Tribune* 1881; Dopke 2009:19).

The Treaty of the Wolf River provided the opportunity they were seeking. Dean sold his Omro holdings, and the cousins pored over the maps and notes held at the land office in Menasha. They focused their attention on the future Civil Towns of Carlton and Kewaunee in Kewaunee County, snapping up as many parcels as they could afford. Taylor, while not officially partnering with the cousins, was one of a small number of speculators doing the same (Bureau of Land Management 2023; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c). Dean, Borland, and Taylor bought direct in some cases. Other land was bought from speculators or from brokers dealing in bounty land given to veterans of the War of 1812. The lot that would be known as Dean's Pier, and later as Carlton, was one such property, sold by the U. S. Government to one Marion McCall in 1854 (Bureau of Land Management 2023).

Dean and family journeyed northeast to homestead the quiet stretch of lakeshore ca. 1854–1855, leaving Taylor behind in Omro. In their first years in Kewaunee County Dean's little family set up a new home and oversaw construction of a steam sawmill. Elisha and Jeanette Dean welcomed their firstborn there in June of 1855 (Dopke 2013:3; Wing 1921–1922:6). There was nothing like the Fox River nearby, but there was a small stream running through the deep ravine. Lake Michigan provided water transport direct to Chicago and the other cities growing on the lake's southern shores. The seemingly endless forests were all around them.

Manpower was easy to obtain. Far to the east, other families were packing, too. Immigrants from Europe, Quebec, and the eastern United States streamed towards Wisconsin and to the lands so recently taken from Native populations. As Wisconsin achieved statehood, ethnic strife erupted between Czech and German residents of Bohemia, a province of the Habsburg Empire. Though the Czech movement was temporarily defeated (the region would later become part of the Czech

Republic), many ethnic Germans chose to leave. Three Bohemians named ‘Anton’—Johan-Anton Bach, Anton Tischmacher, and Anton Kieweg, were among the throng ushering their wives and children onto ships bound for America. Dean’s vision changed the course of their destinies (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1915a).

Dean & Borland used their combined funds to dam the creek to create a millpond, build a grist mill to go with the sawmill, extend a pier out into the lake, and set up a general store (Dopke 2009:19). The growing complex did not, of course, spring from their pocketbooks alone. Workers came to build the dam, drive the pilings, and build the mills and store. The mills required millwrights. The store needed clerks. Machinery needed maintenance and repair. Strong shoulders were needed to stockpile goods and to load and unload cargo. The workers needed horse teams and oxen and wagons and sleighs, and men to care for the beasts of burden and to drive them. The animals needed oats and hay. Tools needed to be made and repaired. Crops needed to be planted. There were wages to be paid, and wages to be earned. The lakeshore trail became a wagon road and the surrounding trees began to fall.

The Bachs and Tischmachers landed first at Milwaukee. There, daughter Anna Tischmacher met and married blacksmith Frederick Poser (Beers & Co 1895:503; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1891d, 1911). The rest, excepting son John Tischmacher, decided to try their luck further north and boarded the steamer *Cleveland* in 1856. After a long and wave-tossed trip and a delayed landing at Kewaunee, the families set off inland to new homes on adjoining properties just southwest of the village, near what was later called Seidel’s Lake (*Algoma Record* 1915b). Fred and Anna Poser followed and settled nearby (Beers & Co 1895:503; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1891d). Anton and Maria Kieweg established a homestead nearer Dean & Borland’s settlement in 1857. The same year, the schooner *Blue Bell* landed at Dean & Borland’s new pier and dropped off the Feldman family. The Feldmans bought land from Dean and set up an inn and boarding house (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c).

That November, winter supplies for Dean & Borland and the surrounding community were loaded onto the schooner *Alwilde*. She sprang a leak while passing Big Point Sable, Michigan and wrecked, taking crucial provisions with her (Wing 1921–1922:38). It was a hard blow. Elisha and Jeanette Dean had not one, but two little mouths to feed; son Edgar Wilcox Dean was born that June. The Feldmans had several children, as did many of the newly arriving settlers. One month later, 17-year-old John Dishmaker (having anglicized his name) came north to Kewaunee to join his parents, his sister Anna Marie, and his other siblings (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1921).

In 1858, Borland set up an office in Chicago near the Van Buren Street bridge (*Chicago Tribune* 1881). He bought the schooner *Ithica* to handle their trade—another indication that a pier must have been active (Gerald C. Metzler Great Lakes Vessel Database 2023; Wing 1921–1922:38). The *Ithica* probably was not the only vessel stopping at the Dean & Borland mills. Historic accounts indicate that traffic up and down the lakeshore was becoming a regular sight (Dopke 2009:19; Wing 1921–1922:38). With Dean at the pier and Borland in Chicago, the partnership kept their affairs in order at both ends of the shipping line.

Advertisements were placed in the Kewaunee newspaper broadcasting that they were open for business. “Dean’s Pier-Carlton. E. B. Dean Proprietor, does a general forwarding and commission

business. Buys logs, shingles, shingle-bolts, wood, bark, etc.” states one ad. Another, in the same issue, introduces “E. B. Dean. Dealer in dry goods, groceries, boots & shoes, clothing, provisions, hay & feed. Sells cheap for cash or in exchange for produce, shingles, wood, bark, logs, single bolts &c.” (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859b). “E. B. Dean, at his steam mill in Carlton, keeps constantly on hand a good assortment of all kinds of lumber for the retail trade” boasts another ad, run later in the year (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859c).

The ads lay out the ‘standard’ economic strategy used by the owners of most of Wisconsin’s ghost ports. Though the piers are often described as ‘lumber piers,’ and certainly played a major role in the export of lumber and timber products, a wide variety of goods passed over their decks. Incoming settlers arrived to find their land thickly timbered. They set about making clearings, building cabins and outbuildings, and opening up fields where they could grow grain and root crops. If their farmstead had a successful start, they found themselves with a surplus of cut wood and grain that needed to be milled. The supplies brought with them, however, were likely low and in need of replacement or repair. Logging outfits—some in the employ of lumber dealers and sawmill owners—also needed to get their products to market and their tools and supplies replenished.

This is where Dean & Borland, the Luxemburg Pier Company, and other pier operators stepped in. Apart from sending their own teams to cut timber on company-owned lands, they offered to buy wood and produce from others. Their customers could then take cash in hand back with them to salt away. But why do so? There was the mill where their grain could be milled into flour. There was a sawmill where they could have their wood turned into good lumber. The feather in the cap of the pier owners was the general store, full of needed items and little luxuries. Some stores were located inland, nearer earlier mills or existing population centers. At others, as at Dean & Borland’s complex, the store was located at the pier. New boots and hats, cloth to sew into clothing for growing children, coffee for cold mornings, sweet molasses, horse tackle, plows, saws, and hammers were all for sale. Families made shingles and posts in their spare time, because wood was currency. In the coastal forestlands of Wisconsin, money literally did grow on trees.

Wagon loads of timber, shingles, posts, and ties were sent to the piers and piled in great heaps wherever there was room. Farm produce was boxed, crated, barreled, and bagged. The pier operators contracted with ship captains (or simply bought their own vessels) to take their cargoes south to Chicago, where it was sold for a profit if all went well. A portion of those profits was used to buy new goods for their stores, which was shipped northward to the piers, completing the circle. The remaining balance went into supporting their workforce and into their bank accounts. Savvy pier owners scrupulously guarded their reputations and balanced their purchase and sale prices well, seeking the sweet spot that filled their businesses with happy, loyal customers and their pockets with gold.

Not that it always went well. Timber and grain prices rose and fell. The weather was unpredictable and the lake fickle and dangerous. The sums coming in didn’t always balance or exceed those going out. Sometimes debts came due. In August of 1859 the State of Wisconsin seized 30,000 feet of lumber, a pair of grey horses, and a yoke of red oxen from Dean & Borland and auctioned them off at a Sheriff’s sale at the store (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859c). Just a few months later, however, indications were that business was brisk. Local settlers got an additional unexpected windfall and a

balancing of the loss of 1857's winter supplies when new household items floated ashore from a shipwreck somewhere out on the lake. The Feldman family snagged a spinning wheel. Others walked away with furniture, food, and stoves still packed in their shipping crates (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c).

By then, Ed Bach, eldest son of Anton Bach, had left his father's farm near Kewaunee and moved to the Dean & Borland complex. He left behind his parents, younger brothers Peter, Martin, Heinrich, and Frederick, and younger sister Mary. His sister Anna was no longer living at home. John Dishmaker and Anna Bach had caught each other's eyes, and married, and were living on the Dishmaker farm next door. Dishmaker's father died shortly after they settled and the son supported his family by making wagons (United States Census Records 1860). The newlyweds were 19 years old. Ed Bach was 21. Ed took a job with Dean & Borland, though the nature of his early employment isn't entirely clear. He may have landed a contract running the lathe mill at the Dean & Borland sawmill (*Algoma Record* 1915b) or may have taken an equally hard and dangerous job firing the mill's boilers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1933). Fred Poser came to Dean's Pier too, serving as their blacksmith until the end of the Civil War (Beers & Co. 1895:503)

For a time, Dean & Borland operated the only flour mill in many miles (the next opened at Ahnapee in October of 1859 [*Kewaunee Enterprise* October 12, 1859f]). Wagon loads of wheat were brought in daily during the fall harvest season, drawing in customers from a wide area. The traffic caught the attention of the correspondents of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* as it passed through their town, and the newspaper reported that the mill was "being run to its utmost capacity" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1859d).

### *Dean's Mill in 1860*

In July and August 1860, legal notices were run in the local newspapers, signaling more financial trouble for the partners. Readers were informed that Dean and Borland were among several defendants successfully sued by one Joseph S. Cogswell, a debt-collector also involved in lawsuits against the owners of Sprague's Pier that year. Half interests in their mortgaged properties and effects were auctioned off until the judgement and associated court costs were satisfied. The forfeitures of relevance to Dean & Borland were timberlands in the interior of Carlton Township near the East Twin River, three to four miles west and southwest of their mill site (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1860g). The firm sold the *Ithica*, though whether to raise funds or for other reasons is unknown (Gerald C. Metzler Great Lakes Vessel Database 2023).

Ernest Warner, stepson of the elder Feldman, described Dean's Pier in 1860 as "...quite a lively place of business. The mill was running and farmers brought in great quantities of shaved shingles and other forest products" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c). Just what the growing community looked like at this point is a matter of some guesswork, informed by census records, historic accounts, and later maps (Figure 37).

The land around the pier complex was clear of trees and open to the sky from the lakeshore to the far side of the road. West of the clearing lay vast forests, though nearby timber was being cut and farms were open or opening to the north and south. A wooden but sturdy bridge spanned the lower reaches of the ravine, crossing over an eight-foot-deep millpond. Logs brought to the complex

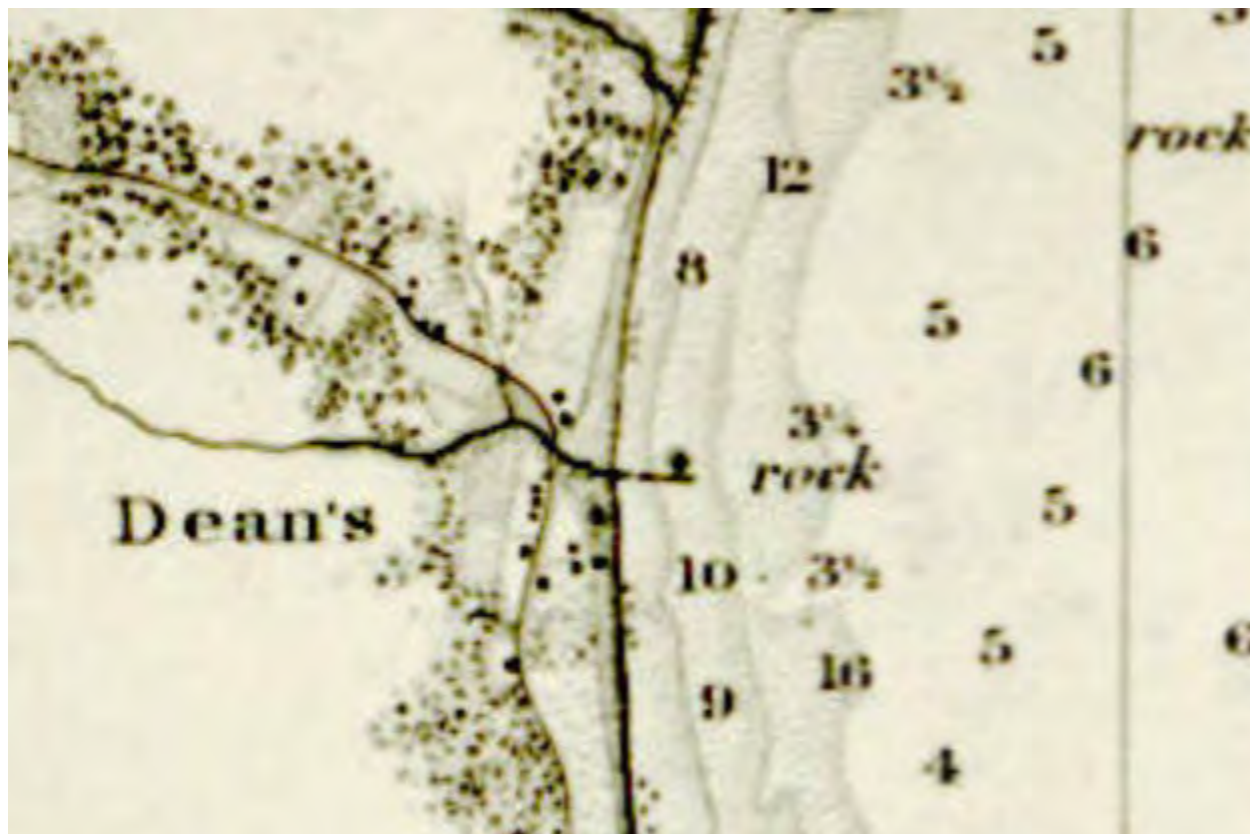


Figure 37: 1866/1877 coastal chart showing location of Dean's Pier. Note the lakeshore road crossing the creek and turning westward, the cluster of buildings around the bridge over the creek, and the building at the end of the pier. Numbers in the lake denote the water depth in feet (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1877).

were tipped into the pond, then jacked up a slide into a steam-powered sawmill that stood next to the pond (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943). Workers piled cut lumber and posts nearby. A small pier stretched out from the lakeshore, situated so that the *Ithica* (under new owners) and other vessels could come alongside, load timber, and unload goods for the store.

From Dean's Pier southward, the wagon road stretched past Sandy Bay and Two Creeks, and further to Two Rivers and Manitowoc. Modern Lakeshore Road follows this route. On the north side of the ravine, the road turned inland, heading west into the timberlands and the source of Dean & Borland's business rather than continuing north to Kewaunee. A visitor to the community wrote in June of 1860 that Dean & Borland had extended a "log road" westward for a distance of at least three miles—a type of construction known as corduroy (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1860e). Workers set logs side-by-side perpendicular to the direction of travel, creating a bumpy, ridged, but less-muddy travel route. In the winter, covered in snow and ice, it would have been a durable way for sleds laden with heavy loads to reach the pier. Today, this route bears the name "Lake Road".

A complex of rough wooden buildings stood in the cleared area, extending north along the road to the far side of the ravine, and south along the road and ravine banks to the lakeshore. The mills were located at the ravine, and the store stood along the road. The commercial part of the complex

would also have included the blacksmith shop, stables, barns, and sheds or outbuildings. The Feldman inn and boarding house sat on an eight-acre parcel, somewhere nearby.

Around the complex were the homes of Dean and his workers. The 1860 census places Dean and his growing family in one dwelling. Next door was a boarding house or workman's house run by his parents Ephraim and Polly Dean. Ed Bach lived there. His occupation is listed as 'clerk,' suggesting that if he labored in the sawmill, he did not labor long. Bach shared his space with five other housemates apart from the elder Mr. and Mrs. Dean. The list includes another clerk, two laborers, and a sixteen-year-old girl.

Very interestingly, given the later history of the community, Dean and Borland's names do not appear in association with a farm. Instead, clerk Ed Bach's name appears on the 1860 agricultural schedule in their place. The Bach farm was small. It was worth only \$1,200 (\$44,100 in modern currency), and boasted a single milk cow, a team of oxen, one other head of cattle, and ten pigs. Twenty-five acres were under cultivation, and 155 were not or had not yet been cleared. Even so, Bach brought in 600 bushels of wheat, 100 bushels of rye, 30 bushels of corn, 100 bushels of oats, two bushels of peas, 80 bushels of potatoes, and ten bushels of barley. The single cow gave enough cream to make 50 pounds of butter. The farm produced sixty pounds of sugar, from maple sap or other sources. The McNally farm at the Sandy Bay pier a couple of miles south, despite more acreage under cultivation, produced only a fraction of the harvest that Bach brought in (U. S. Census 1860). It was a foreshadowing of things to come.

The surrounding homes were occupied by families. Within their walls were several men identified as laborers, a carpenter, a tailor, a sawyer, and three sailors (United States Census 1860). The manufacturing schedule for the 1860 census specifies that Dean and Borland employed a workforce of 24 millhands. Ernest Warner later remembered the names of seventeen. Two that remained in his memory were said to own "fishing rigs" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c). There were a few Bohemians, but most of the residents hailed from the eastern United States, the British Isles, or Canada (United States Census Records 1860).

Financially, the firm reported that their investment in the mill totaled \$40,000 (about 1.4 million dollars in modern currency) but had brought in \$40,000 worth of logs the previous year and produced a million board feet of lumber worth \$100,000 (\$3.6 million today). (United States Census 1860). At least some of the profit being made was funneled to partners, backers, and the holders of loans, and put towards expenses. The workforce of 24 men, for example, were paid \$600 per month.

### *The War Years*

The financial troubles of 1860 didn't slow the partners down, nor did they stop men from seeking employment in the mills. Around this time, Mr. Charles Arpin, an immigrant from Canada, took a position with the firm. He brought his family to Dean's Pier, including three-year-old Alfred W. Arpin. One of the elder Arpin's first jobs was pier construction, wielding axe and auger (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943). Dean & Borland received official state sanction to maintain their pier in February of 1861 (*Wisconsin State Journal* 1861). The same month, logger Chester Gillman made



the Kewaunee paper by pulling a single load of 2,047 feet of pine to Dean's Pier, traveling over four miles on a two-horse sled (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1861b).

Sometime that year, a Chicago lumber dealer named William Blanchard became a co-signee in Dean & Borland (described at that point as 'shingle manufacturers'), suggesting that the partners sought additional loans (Hotchkiss 1894:176). In the interim, and with Blanchard's possible assistance, the pier community grew in size and prominence, rising to become the third-largest settlement in Kewaunee County (Dopke 2009:20). The Feldmans added a dance hall to their entertainment complex (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c).

Dancing, however, was not on the minds of many of Kewaunee County's citizens. Rebel forces fired on Fort Sumpter that spring. Wisconsin's citizens were far from the horrors of the Civil War, but it did not take long before its effects reverberated in the timberlands. Troops were raised. The first young men from Wisconsin mustered and some fought and fell at Shiloh. In August of 1862, word reached Kewaunee County that they were behind their troop quota. Local leaders called for a war meeting to be held in Kewaunee and stumped for volunteers.

Charles H. Cunningham organized the core of what would become the "Kewaunee Guards," Company A of the 27<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry. Most of the men joined in mid-August, at the war meeting or shortly after. Ed Bach and John Dishmaker were among them. Both left families behind. Bach had married Francis Minerva White only four months prior and she was already pregnant with their first child. John Dishmaker sent Anna and their two-year-old son John, Jr. to live in Kewaunee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1915c). The draft came for those less willing (Wing 1921–1922). Dean found himself with vacant positions to fill.

Borland, in the meantime, was exploring a more formal partnership with William Blanchard in Chicago, the first steps in the formation of the firm of Blanchard & Borland. In September, he took passage north. Perhaps Borland intended to see his cousin and discuss business matters face-to-face rather than through letters. Perhaps he wanted to examine the situation in Dean's Pier first-hand, or to conduct other transactions in Wisconsin. He made no moves to withdraw from the firm of Dean & Borland, but he may have had reason to tell Dean that his participation in their affairs would be limited for some time.

On a mid-September day in 1862 Borland stood on the deck of the Goodrich steamer *Sunbeam* as she maneuvered to tie up alongside the pier at Kewaunee. He was 26 years old. As he surveyed the scene, he saw a man named Thomas Grover fall from the pier immediately in front of the vessel. Borland dove over the rail. Men tossed ropes from the *Sunbeam*. Borland grabbed the struggling Grover and held him close. The pair, "with some assistance" were pulled up onto deck by the deckhands "amid a general manifestation of gratitude for his prompt exertions in saving a fellow man from an untimely death" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1862d).

This incident reveals much about Borland's frame of mind and his character. He told Blanchard (whether before or after his visit to Kewaunee is unknown) that he "felt full of health and life, and it was not right for him to stay at home while the boys were away fighting for the country" (*Chicago Tribune* 1881). He enlisted. Borland's partnership with Blanchard went ahead, but the



Figure 38: The Goodrich steamer Sunbeam, from Historical Collections of the Great Lakes, Bowling Green State University.

Chicago city directory for 1863 gave his address as “officer in Army” (Halpin and Bailey 1863:56).

A couple of weeks later, Thomas Grover walked back onto the pier to board the steamer *Comet* with his fellow Kewaunee Guards and report to Camp Sigel in Milwaukee. Whether or not he was able to shake Borland’s hand on board is surprisingly difficult to confirm. George Wing’s history of Kewaunee County (1921–1922) contradicts itself in places and presents an inaccurate timeline.

Wing has Borland enlist in October, well after army records state Borland was elected to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant (Quiner 1866:760). Wing also claims that Borland and the other officers were elected unanimously, suggesting an early group vote. However, Borland received his rank weeks after the other officers were elected to their positions. Wing mentions offhandedly that two volunteers did not board the *Comet*, but instead headed directly to Milwaukee after finishing up some business in Two Rivers. Could Borland have been one of those men? Another mystery is a puzzling gap in leadership. Apart from Borland, the officers of Company A were elected before the Guards left Kewaunee. Why skip over the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. position when filling out the officer roster?

In any case, they weren’t away from home for long. As the draft spread, new immigrants were served with notices to fight in a war they wanted nothing to do with. A group of Belgian

immigrants stormed the draft office in Kewaunee, finding only Draft Officer W. S. Finley's wife. They couldn't speak English and she couldn't speak French so the protest was put on hold until an interpreter was found. In the meantime, she and other business owners calmed everyone down over a snack of cheese and crackers. As for Finley, he had fled for the *Sunbeam* when he heard the Belgians coming down the street, jumping onto the steamer as she pulled away from the pier. He returned from Milwaukee with the Kewaunee Guards. They bemusedly patrolled their own streets to ensure that no other 'riots' sent Finley running for the lake again (Bertrand 2014). The Kewaunee Guards formally mustered back in Milwaukee on March 7, 1863, after the last of the draft-dodgers were rounded up.

Just over a week later, Company A headed south to 'see the elephant' (Quiner 1866:760). Their leadership was reorganized somewhat. Cunningham was still Captain, but 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Jerome Saltzman was promoted to the role of assistant surgeon. John J. Borland marched south wearing the stripes of a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. His 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant was the former Company sergeant, Ed Bach (*Chicago Tribune* 1863; *Kewaunee Enterprize* 1863a; Quiner 1866:760). John Dishmaker served as the Company drummer. Thomas Grover, their fellow enlistee, was not with them. He lay in a sickbed, unable to travel, and died of fever at Camp Sigel one week after the rest of the Guards departed.

The regiment saw little fighting for their first year. The Kewaunee Guards mainly spent their time digging fortifications, manning picket lines, and being guards, though their travels took them to the siege of Vicksburg and the capture of Little Rock (Quiner 1866). In March 1864, a year after departing Wisconsin, they were ordered to join an attempt to sweep the Confederates out of southern Arkansas. What would become known as the Camden Expedition did not go as planned. The column was caught on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1864, attempting to retreat across the swollen Saline River south of Little Rock in the midst of flooding rains and wind. The Union prevailed, though losses were heavy. Borland was wounded in the midst of the sodden, muddy mess, and endured an agonizing three-day march back to Little Rock with Bach and Dishmaker, on terrible roads with little in the way of rations or wheeled transport.

News of the battle reached Kewaunee County in early May. Borland was listed among the injured but was described as "with the company and doing well" (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1864c). He was not doing well enough. In the aftermath of the battle promotions rippled down the ranks. Borland was elevated to Captain on May 24<sup>th</sup>, but couldn't muster in. Later accounts described his wounds as severe. He was discharged from service on July 12<sup>th</sup> (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1915c). Borland, likely still in pain and ill health, headed home.

In his absence, Dean's Pier thrived. The community, by then sporadically referred to as 'Forest Hill,' had grown to include 28 buildings. The general store boasted a post office, opened in 1863. Dean, of course, was postmaster. Traffic was steady and the store was well-stocked. The previous winter, timber flowed towards the pier in abundance, and wood products were piled on and around the pier awaiting ships such as the schooners *J. Lawrence* and *A. Baensch* to load them (*Semi-Weekly Wisconsin* 1864; *Daily Milwaukee News* 1864). One note in the Milwaukee papers described a single shipment of 2,000 split cedar posts on the *A. Baensch* worth over \$5,300 in modern currency (*Daily Milwaukee News* 1864).

Apart from worries about the well-being of Borland and other members of the Kewaunee Guards after news trickled in about the battle at Jenkin's Ferry, the main topic of conversation was likely drought. While the weather on the battlefields of Arkansas had been all too wet, spring in Kewaunee County brought little rain at all. Fires sparked up and spread. At first, the damages were minor—backwoods stockpiles of cut timber, farm fences, and the like (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1864c). The residents of the Town of Carlton fought the fires as best they could, keeping them from doing too much damage. May of 1864 concluded with calmer winds and a brief rain that relieved the situation somewhat (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1864e).

On Sunday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1864, a strong wind arose from the southwest, blowing the fires back up and straight into Dean's Mill. In one hour, the "pleasant little hamlet on the lake" (Holmes 1862) was gone. Only three houses survived. News of the calamity was carried in local papers the following week.

Terrible Conflagration—The most destructive fire that ever visited this county occurred at the little village of Forest Hill...So rapid was its progress, that it was in several instances impossible to save anything from the burning buildings, families having barely time to escape by running down the high bluff to the lake shore. Whatever household goods were saved had to be tumbled down this precipice of fifty feet nearly perpendicular. One team of horses belonging to Messrs. Borland and Dean, hauling water from the lake, cut off by the flames in attempting to get back up the hill, perished. Hogs, dogs, and cats were actually known to have been burned alive, not apprehending the danger in time to escape. The night was spent by the families burnt out on the beach...the misfortune falls most heavily on Messrs. Borland and Dean, their bridge pier, extending into the lake several hundred feet, and constructed at a cost of nearly four thousand dollars, was entirely consumed, also their store and extensive stock of merchandise, steam saw mill, warehouses, barns, boarding house, dwellings, twelve hundred thousand shingles, 1000 cords wood, 100 cords bark, a large number of railroad ties and posts, several thousand feet of lumber, 700 bushels oats, 80 barrels salt, wagons, sleds, and lumbering implements. They estimate their loss as \$50,000. No insurance. The loss of the pier is a great calamity, as there is now no means of shipping what wood, bark, ties, posts &c. that have been spared by the fire and are to be manufactured hereafter, and it will require nearly the whole season to rebuild it (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1864g).

In modern currency, Borland & Dean suffered an uninsured loss of nearly a million dollars. Just when Borland learned of the disaster is unknown. Did he receive a letter from Dean or Blanchard as he lay in his sickbed in Arkansas? Did the news greet him when he arrived in Chicago? In Wisconsin, Dean was furiously attempting to salvage the situation. If there was any chance of recovering, it lay in being able to ship to Chicago. He immediately arranged for the pier and store "and such other buildings as will be necessary to carry on their business as heretofore" to be rebuilt (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1864h). Borland, however, had had enough. In January of 1865, he sold his stake to Joel V. Taylor (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1865) and took up his partnership with Blanchard.

The move was a good one. At the height of the lumber boom Blanchard & Borland were the leading shipping house on Lake Michigan, moving over 100 million feet of lumber per year. One

of their innovations was a new financial tactic—advancing sufficient loans to the lumber suppliers at the pier communities so that they could comfortably lay in enough stock to ship in the spring. Whether this was Blanchard's idea, or a strategy proposed by Borland after his earlier difficulties with Dean & Borland, is unknown. Most of the lumber merchants in Chicago eventually followed suit, bringing needed stability to the lumber market (Hotchkiss 1894:176).

When Borland eventually sold his interest in Blanchard & Borland in 1878, he was a millionaire again. He did not live to enjoy it for long. The trauma inflicted on his person during the war never quite healed. He spent the last years of his shortened life fighting various ailments and died in Chicago at the age of 44 (*Chicago Tribune* 1881).

### ***Transitions: Dean & Taylor 1864–1867***

Joel V. Taylor, meanwhile, stayed behind in Omro. He met Mary E. Holcomb, married her in 1852, and began a family. In 1858, Taylor was appointed Captain of the Omro Light Infantry Life Guards, a local militia (*Omro Republican* 1858). Contemporary sources in Omro indicate that he remained in the growing lumber town until he resumed his active partnership with Dean (*Omro Union* 1866). Whether the partnership had ever really been dissolved in the first place is unclear, however. Taylor's land purchases in Kewaunee County were in essentially the same areas as Dean & Borland's, and often adjoined theirs. It is within the realm of possibility that he was an invisible partner, supplying timber to the sawmill in return for a share of the proceeds. When Borland withdrew from active partnership, Taylor either was offered Borland's interest in the firm or his partnership emerged into view.

Taylor lived in Omro for 15 years, learning the ins-and-outs of sawmills and the lumber trade (Unknown 1903). He acquired a good reputation there, as a "generous and universally respected gentleman" (*Omro Union* 1866). He seems to have been initially determined to live a similar life in Dean's Pier. He moved his family to the rebounding complex and dabbled in local politics, but before long moved south to Evanston, Illinois to take Borland's former role managing the firm's shipping and city business (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946a). Unlike Borland, he did not stay office-bound. Instead, he worked aboard ships carrying lumber to and from Kewaunee County, becoming a ship's captain and "one of the best known of the sailors" (Unknown 1903).

Taylor's arrival in Kewaunee County came in the midst of rebuilding. The new pier was up and running by the start of the 1866 shipping season, and the complex was reconstituted. After a return visit to Omro, a friend at the local newspaper reported that the firm was doing all the business that "belongs to a saw mill, store, black smith and wagon shop, a pier, and the shipping of all their material and trade to Chicago." They purchased a ship to replace the *Ithica*, but one ship was inadequate. The pair negotiated contracts with other lumber carriers to pick up the extra load (*Omro Union* 1866). Ed Bach returned to his job as a clerk. John Dishmaker settled back in with his family in Kewaunee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1915b). Fred Poser quit after the fire and moved to Kewaunee as well (Beers & Co 1895:503; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1891d).

In March of 1866, Dean and unspecified backers (quite possibly Taylor) bought a two-masted schooner named the *A. Baensch*. This may be the ship mentioned in the Omro press, provided that the paperwork took a few weeks to process. Dean was registered as its master. The *A. Baensch* was

nine years old, one-hundred feet long, and worth several thousand dollars. Published lists of arrivals and departures at Dean's Pier in spring and summer of 1866 record trips by the *A. Baensch* and the schooners *Challenge*, *Peoria*, *Blue Bell*, *C. North*, and *George E. Purington*, picking up tanning bark, shingles, posts, and milled wood. During one month, the *A. Baensch* made five round trips from Dean's Pier to Chicago, and the *Peoria* and *Blue Bell* two each (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1866b). The *Chicago Tribune* reported on additional journeys of the *A. Baensch* that season as she continued to ferry lumber from Dean and Taylor's pier. Some of the product was described as wood milled for flooring (*Chicago Tribune* 1866a, 1866b, 1866c).

The *A. Baensch* was not in Dean & Taylor's hands long, however. On the night of September 11, 1866, on her way north from Chicago, the propellor ship *Dean Richmond* ran into her in the darkness. She sank, along with a "small amount of merchandise." Dean and his backers sued. The courts ruled in their favor in 1869, awarding them \$11,000 in damages (over \$240,000 in modern currency) (*Algoma Record* 1916c; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869m).

The lumber boom arrived. The pier complex buzzed as never before. Only two years after the fire, correspondents with the *Kewaunee Enterprise* described Dean's Pier as "entirely rebuilt" and "doing an extensive and paying business, which with their investment, energy, expertise, and perseverance is what they deservedly merit" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1866c). The logging season of 1867 began with a good fall of snow, sending farmers and logging crews streaming towards Kewaunee County's mills. The logging gangs had spent the off-season cutting timber and prepping roads and were now "drawing in more logs in a given length of time than ever before in this country" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867a). Accounts of the lumber trade written in 1867 record visits by the schooners *Contest* and *Kitty Grant*, contracted to carry more posts and more milled wood to Chicago (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867e; *Semi-Weekly Wisconsin* 1867a).

Dean, who might have watched the scene with satisfaction, was still dreaming big. Rather than resting on his laurels, he partnered with two prominent former residents of Kewaunee—mill owner James Slauson and former Captain of the Kewaunee Guards Charles Cunningham—to form the company of Cunningham, Slauson, & Dean of Racine, Wisconsin. The new company purchased the Chicago Lumbering Company of Michigan complex at Epsport, Michigan (modern Manistique). He left Dean's Mills for Michigan, worked there for a few years, then moved to Oakland, California in 1872. He continued in the lumber business, buying mills and timberlands at Coos Bay, Oregon. He died in 1905 (Dopke 2013:4).

## ***Forest to Farm: Taylor & Bach 1867–1875***

### ***The Lumber Boom Begins***

With Taylor in Evanston or on shipboard and Dean about to depart for good for Michigan, a successor was needed to run the firm's business in Kewaunee County. Dean and Taylor turned to their store clerk, Edward Bach (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867j). A photograph of Ed Bach taken later in life captures a man with sad, distant eyes and light, receding hair (Figure 39). His round face and ample chin speak to wealth, light physical labor, and well-stocked tables. In 1867, however, Ed Bach was only in his early 30s and just embarking on his career. As a clerk and millhand, he was intimately familiar with the operations of the complex. As a farmer, he knew a thing or two





*Figure 39: Edward Bach (Find a Grave.com).*

about agricultural life. As a military officer, he was used to command. It was a good combination, and one that helped steer the course of Kewaunee County's history.

For a time, the complex stayed out of the way of that history. It re-emerged in the pages of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* in January of 1869, with the news that "Messrs. Taylor & Bach, at Dean's Mill, in the town of Carlton, like all the rest of our merchants seem to have all the business they can attend to, and more, too, in these lively times." That week, the partners bought 1,300 ties, 235 cords of wood, and a "fair proportion" of posts and tanning bark (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869a).

All that wood needed to be shipped south. Ships arrived as the ice broke up. Late in the morning of April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1869, the schooner *Mt. Vernon* pulled alongside the pier. Nearly three-thousand ties were waiting for her, and pier workers and her crew spent the day loading them. The wind picked up as night fell. Her captain tried to move away from the pier so that the newly loaded schooner didn't strike it in the mounting waves. Something went wrong. The *Mt. Vernon* didn't respond to her helm and drifted onto a shoal, where she struck and flooded. The ship went down 200 feet north of the pier, about 150 feet inside the pier's end, and settled with her deck level with the water. Her captain took the ship's boat to shore and headed south to Manitowoc to telegraph for a tug (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869d).

The sight of a schooner's rigged masts, spars, and rails protruding from the water that close to the pier was sure to catch the attention of the other captains as they maneuvered in to tie up. And the pier certainly was busy. In the four days before the *Mt. Vernon* sank, the schooner *Sarah Clow* picked up 4,500 ties, the schooner *Hamlet* dropped off five tons of merchandise in exchange for 140 cords of wood, the propeller ship *Lady Franklin* stopped by on her way to Chicago from Washington Harbor, and the schooner *Mary* picked up 65 more cords of wood. In the five days following, the tug *Union* arrived with a steam pump to tend to the *Mt. Vernon*, the scow *Hercules* picked up posts, the schooner *A. Rust* stopped on her way north from Chicago, and the *Ithica* (under her new owners) loaded a cargo of ties (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869e).

The *Lady Franklin* came past while the *Union* was fussing around the sunken ship, and her captain watched as crews tossed railroad ties into the lake. He felt that the *Mt. Vernon* could be saved. Sadly not. The crew of the *Union* dropped the level of water in her hold a bit, dredged a deep trench in the sand she settled into, and pulled her free. Then the weather turned sour. The tug crew only managed to pull her 50 feet closer to the pier before she sank again. Not long after the *Lady Franklin* reported in at Milwaukee, the *Union* returned to Manitowoc with word that the *Mt. Vernon* was breaking up (*Manitowoc Tribune* 1869; *Milwaukee Sentinel* 1869). The *Mt. Vernon* was old and patched and worn, and despite considerable expense spent the previous season attempting to make her shipshape, the insurance company decided it wasn't worth it to keep trying. She was stripped of her rigging and spars and abandoned. The load of ties she carried was mainly saved, with minimal loss to Taylor & Bach (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869f). She went to pieces

within weeks and the sporadic booms, cracks, and crashes of her demise mixed with the soft roar of the waves and jangled nerves in the little port.

Business resumed. The next week's ships came and went with regularity. The list of vessels includes the schooners *Mary*, *Hamlet*, *Hercules*, *C. C. Butts*, *S. C. Irwin*, and *Ketchum*, the brig *Carrier*, and the steamers *Manitowoc* and *Alpena*. They loaded thousands of railroad ties, thousands of cedar and hemlock posts, cords of wood, great heaps of tanning bark, and sawed maple. The *Union* visited regularly. The propeller ships *Lady Franklin* and *Truesdell* picked up over 100,000 wooden barrel hoops (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869f, 1869g, 1869i; 1869j, 1869k). Many of the ships made multiple trips, sometimes calling two or three times in a week. By the end of the season no fewer than 83 cargoes had been shipped to Chicago by Taylor & Bach (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869w).

Under Ed Bach's guidance, the little community put on a new face. Though still referred to as Dean's Mills or Dean's Pier, with Elisha Dean gone and the settlement now the largest in the Town of Carlton, the name 'Carlton' began to stick. Bach put on an enticing front for potential customers, but he made it clear that not everyone was welcome. He put a notice in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* warning timber thieves to stay away from Taylor & Bach lands, and offering a \$25 reward to anyone who turned in a wood poacher (modern value \$550) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869l) (Figure 40). Bach refurbished the general store, painting and whitewashing it until it looked "as bright as a girl in a new dress" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869u) (Figures 41 and 42). The partners purchased "goods of all descriptions suited to the wants of their patrons" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869t; 1869u).

### *Dean's Mill/Carlton in 1870*

The 1870s dawned with a bright future on the horizon. Ed Bach and his senior partner were earning a good reputation for "enterprise and honorable dealing". Taylor purchased the schooner *Driver*, part of a fleet of vessels he would own over the course of his career. Later years brought the schooners *Floretta*, *Perry Hannah*, *Kate Gillett*, and *Radical*, among others. Two ships—the schooner *J. V. Taylor* and tug *J. V. Taylor* bore his name.

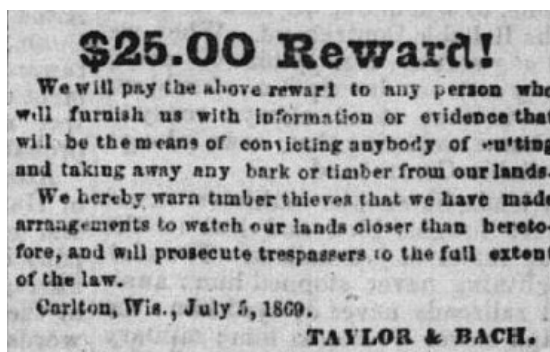


Figure 40: Reward notice published *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869l.

An account of Taylor & Bach's operations at the end of January 1870 described "quite a settlement." The complex included the mill, the pier, and the store, as well as the blacksmith shop and wagon shop, all "in operation with a good patronage" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870a). Smoke and steam rose from the working buildings in the complex, and any hint of quiet was gone. Horse teams shuttled to and from forestlands to the complex and its lumberyards. Schooners, scows, and steamships sailed to and from the pier. The community resounded with the sounds of saws, whistles, hammer blows, shouts, hoofbeats, and creaking, rumbling wagons.

Edward Bach, identified as a merchant in the 1870 census records, was head of household. He lived in the main home with his wife Francis and their sons William, Charles, and Walter. Martin Bach, Edward's brother, lived nearby and had taken a job as a clerk. The community blacksmith lived nearby as well. Charles Arpin appears on the census, identified as a laborer (U. S. Census 1870). The boarding house was gone, as were the inn and dance hall—likely burned out in the fire of 1864. Carlton under the regime of Ed Bach was resolutely dry.

The land surrounding the lumber complex was much more open than it had been ten years previously. Far more was under cultivation. A picture of agricultural life in 1870 comes from the pages of the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, which started the year with a glowing review of the company farm.

The finest farm we have yet visited in the county is situated here and belongs to Taylor & Bach. In its management Edward Bach, Esq., the resident partner of the concern, takes especial pride. It is supplied with every necessary variety of agricultural implement, roomy stables, and capacious granaries, and is well stocked with horses, cattle, sheep and swine. They harvested last year about 2000 bushels of grain and a large quantity of hay (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870a).

The Taylor & Bach farm extended west from the pier complex and encompassed over 300 acres. Ed Bach transformed what had been timber lands feeding the pier into a showplace where he satisfied his agricultural interests and advertised products and seeds for sale at the store. The 1870 census' agricultural schedule reveals that 100 acres were opened for cultivation or pasture. Four



Figure 41: Carlton store, courtesy Kewaunee County Historical Society.



Figure 42: Interior of the Carlton store (Kewaunee Enterprise 1943).

milk cows, a team of oxen, seven head of cattle, and a flock of 15 sheep grazed Bach's fields. They were tended to by farmhands, who were paid \$800 in wages. The fields were mainly planted in oats, though Bach's hands also brought in 240 bushels of wheat. The women of the farm churned 80 pounds of butter. The value of the Taylor & Bach show farm, assessed in 1859 at the equivalent of \$44,100 today, doubled to the modern equivalent of nearly \$90,000 (U. S. Census 1870).

The northwestern corner of the company farm touched lands belonging to John A. Whitaker—a very lucky situation both for Taylor & Bach and for later historians. Whitaker was a talented writer with a flair for humor and gossip that matched Mark Twain's. Under the faint pseudonym "John," Whitaker sent regular columns to the *Kewaunee Enterprise* through the early 1870s, keeping readers abreast of the latest goings-on in and around Carlton. While not all of the locals appreciated having their business aired throughout the region, Ed Bach could hardly complain. Whitaker was one of the best press agents they could have asked for.

At the start of the 1870 planting season, Whitaker reported that the farm was going to be heavily mechanized, from a post-driver for building fences to mechanical seeders, sowers, and reapers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870e). Later columns in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* described the farm's progress. Ed Bach made a successful "experiment" by sowing Norway oats, a crop suited to Wisconsin climate and soils and familiar to many of the immigrants settling the area. Over 275 bushels of grain were sown, and a yield of fifty bushels to the acre was expected. A mile of new

board fence was put up (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870h). The farm was described as a “model farm” and the grain as “magnificent” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870i).

The former commercial colony was now a full-fledged community, with a nearby school, church, cemetery, and social organizations. Travelers journeyed from Two Rivers to Kewaunee and back, passing through the hamlet, and from the lakeshore inland along a widening network of gridded roads to cross-roads saloons and mill complexes springing up in the interior. The forests that once pressed close were cut back away from the lakeshore and stood in shrinking stands patchworked among growing farms for several miles more.

Shipping from the pier was just as heavy as before. Ed Bach proudly reported that the schooner *Julia Smith* took cargo to Racine, making the 260-mile round trip in a blistering 60 hours (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870j). The notice confirms that the partnership was diversifying beyond the Chicago markets. By the end of the year, Taylor & Bach stockpiled and shipped 33,410 railroad ties, 45,000 cedar posts, 3,970 cords of wood, and 2,001 cords of tanning bark. No fewer than 78 cargoes were loaded onto the vessels of the lumber fleet (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871a).

Carlton was growing in other ways as well. Taylor & Bach hired a new bookkeeper named Charles D. Fulton, who relocated from Manitowoc to track their accounts (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870k). They recalculated their rates, dropping profits low to draw in more customers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870h). They built a substantial, two-story combination granary and tool/wagon shed sixty-four feet long. At the end of the season, they refurbished the store again and stocked it with the best goods on offer. Their lumber yards were cleared, and the pier was given a round of inspection, remodeling, and repair to ready it for another busy season (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870l).

There were no repeats of the *Mt. Vernon* incident. Whitaker reported that they had another difficulty instead. Their pier, like most of the piers along the Kewaunee County lakeshore, was reached by a road that dropped down the lake bluffs. In late May, two teams owned by Taylor & Dean and a third owned by another party “...not being satisfied with the slow gait of the drivers, sought to relieve themselves by running away.” The teams were hauling loads of wood and bark onto the piers from the yards above. In the case of the Taylor & Bach teams, the horses were spooked when parts of their loads fell on them on the downslope. The Taylor & Bach teams shot onto and down the pier, sending everything flying. One team nearly ran off the end of the pier into the lake, but were saved a few feet short of disaster when their reins tangled in the wheel spokes and stopped them. Apart from spilled loads, damaged wagons, frightened horses, horrified drivers, and Ed Bach’s frayed nerves, the incidents ended without much harm (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870h).

### *The Year of the Great Fire*

The following year brought far worse luck. In a harbinger of things to come, the lake remained free of ice longer than usual. Snowfall was paltry. The propellor ship *St. Joseph* was able to drop off passengers and deliveries at the pier in late January, a time when Carlton should have been inaccessible by water (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871b). Despite the “indifferently good sleighing,” tanning bark, ties, posts, and other timber products were still arriving, but the final amount

stockpiled only accounted for half their usual winter's take (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871c, 1871e). As 1871's shipping season approached, Ed Bach found himself in more trouble. When the lake did freeze, wind and waves shoved the ice into the newly renovated pier, causing substantial damage (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871d). George Roberts, who lived at the former Sprague Pier location south of Carlton and was a former harbor master at Ahnapee, was hired to quickly repair the pier and put it back into operating condition (*Ahnapee Record* 1873a; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871e).

That spring, Ed Bach's workers sowed three hundred bushels of grain, including 163 bushels of Norway oats. Prospects were not good. As Whitaker noted, "Our crops need rain. Rain is the topic of the day, and the weather judges are busy preparing their almanacks, but they can find no relief except in *signs* of rain which soon pass away, leaving them as disconsolate as ever" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871j). Despite this, Ed Bach was optimistic. He took a "splendid sample bundle" of Norway oats to the offices of the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, telling them that he planned to harvest between four and five thousand bushels and would be selling seed for 1872 to "all who desire it". The *Kewaunee Enterprise* editors promptly notified their readers of that promise and suggested that they avail themselves of the opportunity to obtain "first-class article[s] at a much more moderate price than they will have to pay if they send abroad" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871m). Ed Bach must have been delighted with the free advertising.

He was less so two weeks later. By then, most of his oats were laying flat on the ground, lodged by a violent late evening storm. Crops and buildings were damaged and outhouses and fences were toppled. The captain of the schooner *Mary*, anchored off the pier, saw the storm—possibly a weak tornado—come over the bluffs "like a dense column of smoke," churning the lake white and ripping the *Mary's* furlled mainsail to tatters (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871n). When the disappointing harvest came, it came amongst the smells of dust and distant smoke. The soil was bone dry to a depth of over a foot. Ed Bach's farmhands managed to pull in a decent barley crop but fall planting was halted (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871o).

Two weeks after harvest, fires burned across Kewaunee County. The lead-up to the Great Fire was underway. Ed Bach was well aware of what had happened to his community while he was away at war in 1864, as many of his neighbors and workers would have been. One can only guess at the measures they took and the sleepless nights they suffered. The fires washed over the Taylor & Bach timberlands first, destroying stockpiles awaiting transport to the pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871 q, 1871r). The night of the Great Fire the firestorm swept through northern Kewaunee County, stopping just short of the lakeshore (Wing 1921–1922:45–47). Watchers in Carlton must have stared in horror at the sight of the western and northern skies ablaze and prepared to fight for their homes and lives. In the end, however, southeastern Kewaunee County saw far less damage than other regions. They were spared. Whitaker and George Wing, the young editor of the *Ahnapee Record*, were in Kewaunee. The morning after the fire, they headed north into the burnt-out region. Taylor & Bach's losses paled in comparison to what the newspapermen saw there and were limited to 266 cords of bark and a "large quantity of railroad ties" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871v; Wing 1921–1922:46–47).

The year ended with one final turn of ill-luck. The schooner *Illinois* arrived in mid-November to pick up a last shipment of ties, and somehow wound up on the beach before loading could be completed. Her captain assessed the situation and decided that they were done for the year. He and



the crew walked up the pier road into Carlton to find lodgings for the night. The next morning, the *Illinois* was gone. The captain managed to take passage on the cutter *Andy Johnson*, and headed down the coast asking after his ship. While he searched, the crew of the scow *Anna Tomine* spotted the *Illinois* off of Milwaukee, apparently heading to Chicago on her own. The schooner was partly filled with water, had lost her rudder, anchors, hatches, fore-sail, and a jib; her bulwarks were damaged, and her cabin was wrecked. The fate of her crew was a great mystery in Milwaukee, until all parties connected with one another (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871v).

### *Building a New Future*

In early January of 1872, Taylor, now living in Evansville, Illinois, arrived for his annual visit to Carlton (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872a). His conversations with Ed Bach certainly would have encompassed the events of the previous year, the lessons learned, and plans for the coming year. Snow was falling and timber was coming in at a pleasing rate. Taylor & Bach's lumberyards were filled again, and the sawmill fired up that spring for heavy business. In one eighteen-day run in June the mill workers cut a quarter-million feet of lumber, both for Taylor & Bach and for paying customers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872e, 1872f). The farm was thriving as well. A rare glimpse at the farm buildings comes courtesy of a lightning bolt that struck one of the Taylor & Bach barns. The short report of the damage caused by the strike mentions that the barn was one of a "cluster of five barns," spaced closely enough together that if the struck barn had caught fire none could have been saved (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872i).

Income streamed in from all quarters. Lumber was sold locally to rebuild housing in the burnt-over lands and sold to devastated Chicago. The store was renovated for the spring season and boasted "the best stock of goods ever offered for sale in the town." Fulton manned the store and kept the books (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872g). Bach decided to sow a relatively even mix of wheat and oats, a fair amount of hay and clover, and leave most of the land fallow to heal from the previous year's heat and drought (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872h). He purchased a fine bull and colt to improve his stock's bloodlines. He bought new machines. He set out fruit and shade orchards (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872j).

When Taylor returned again in January of 1873, he must have looked over the books, the farm, the store, and the lumber complex with much more approval. The home that hosted him was noisy and full of life. The Bach family was growing and expanding along with Carlton. Edward and his wife had four young children to look after: ten-year-old William, six-year-old Charles, four-year-old Walter, and baby Gerry. Daughter Marguerite arrived the following year. Mrs. Bach's sister Mary lived with them, and Ed's younger brother Frederick worked in the store.

The business partners made a trip to Kewaunee, and stopped by the *Enterprise* offices to pay their respects (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873a). The editors of the *Enterprise* returned the favor later in January and returned with surprising news. Ed Bach had installed his very own private telegraph line, and the entire family was involved in the venture.

...we spent an hour very pleasantly in witnessing the workings of the telegraph line which Mr. Edward Bach has had put up for the amusement and instruction of himself and his family. He has a battery and instrument at his store and another at

his residence, the two being connected by a line of wire 400 feet in length. Mr. Bach and his brother Fred, and Miss Mary White, his sister-in-law, are already proficient operators and little Willie Bach, 10 years of age, can send a dispatch with creditable accuracy. As the Kewaunee office has no operator at all, we suggest that our folks make an effort to secure the services of one of the four competent ones who are at the Carlton office (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873b).

Writers for the *Manitowoc County Chronicle* came to see for themselves, sleighing up the lakeshore road from Two Rivers in sub-zero temperatures.

Arriving at Carlton, the company was received by Messrs. Ed. and Fred. Bach. Carlton is not a very large village, is situated on a bluff by the lake, and is a delightful place this time of the year, and must be a splendid summer resort. Messrs. Taylor and Bach do an extensive business there. They own the pier, saw mill, store and an extensive farm, and buy any quantity of tan bark, wood, ties, cedar posts, telegraph poles, &c, &c. One of the features of the business, and one which Mr. Bach with right is very proud of, is the stock owned by the company. They have over sixty head of splendid cattle, including a beautiful specimen of a full-blooded short-horn bull, fifty head of sheep, &c. Amongst others, a year-old colt by the famous Messenger, which will undoubtedly do his sire honor in a few years. Another feature is a telegraph communication between the store and the house of Mr. Bach, for the private amusement of the family, in consequence of which nearly all of Mr. Bach's family have learned the art. After partaking of a good dinner, served by Mrs. Bach in her best style on such short notice, the party returned to Two Creeks...(*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873c).



*Figure 43: Wenzel Kieweg (Kewaunee Enterprise 1943).*

The Bachs were making connections, in more ways than one. The telegraph line arrived in Kewaunee County the year before, linking Kewaunee, Carlton, Sandy Bay, and other shoreline communities to Two Rivers, Manitowoc, and settlements further south. Ed Bach and his workers maintained their section at their own cost, as did Sandy Bay, ensuring that information flowed freely up and down the coast (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875n). Their social circle expanded as well, beyond Carlton to the surrounding villages and towns. That spring, when Fulton departed with his family to found his own business in Iowa, Ed Bach and his wife threw a farewell masquerade party that drew in guests from miles around (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873d).

1873 brought other changes. Wenzel Kieweg, only son of early settler Anton Kieweg, now 31 years old and dissatisfied with the life of a farmer, was offered a job clerking and receiving goods (Figure 43). It was another excellent move. Kieweg was described in later years as “a builder.” He was honest, affable, gregarious, and made friends in abundance and with ease. He had a particular

talent for seeing promise in those around him and mentored many of Kewaunee County's future businessmen and leaders (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1916c). As he aged, he took on the appearance of a kindly grandfather, the kind with a twinkle in his eye, laugh-lines everywhere, and a bushy mustache tipped up at the ends to mark the smile beneath.

John Dishmaker, Sr. meanwhile, moved Anna and their children to Casco, in the interior of the northern part of Kewaunee County (Figure 44). The mill in Casco supplied the Langworthy pier complex south of Ahnapee, and Dishmaker put his skills to use making wagons for the mill owners. Life in Kewaunee had brought some creature comforts, but also tragedy. A scarlet fever epidemic in 1869 took their second son Edward and their oldest daughter Anna within a single week (*Algoma Record* 1915b). The grieving couple, with their surviving children to think of, might have welcomed the change in scenery and the opportunities that the growing little village offered.



Figure 44: Anna and John Dishmaker, *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1920b.

Taylor purchased the schooner *Floretta*. He traveled to Buffalo to pick her up and sailed her back to Chicago himself (Thomsen et al. 2014). The Town of Carlton completed work on a new bridge where the lakeshore road crossed over the ravine (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872k, 1873l). Antoine St. Peters, a fellow resident of the Town of Carlton and one of the first Europeans to settle in Kewaunee County, bought a half interest in Ed Bach's threshing machine. Bach then bought a second 10-horsepower Case thresher for himself (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873i).

In September, Taylor's schooner *Driver* ran onto the beach and had to be towed to Manitowoc for repair (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873o).

### *Planning a New Future*

Ed Bach and his family watched the forests recede and pondered the future. The timber stockpiled at the pier early in 1873 was largely milled by mid-summer. Millions of board feet were being shipped south to Chicago and other ports, but the source was finite. Late in 1874, an anonymous letter appeared in the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, promoting the then two-year-old Kewaunee County Agricultural Society. The letter was titled "Words of Truth and Soberness Addressed to the Farmers and Business Men of Kewaunee County." A decision was upon them—adapt or perish.

...When our county was first settled we found an abundance of good merchantable timber, with lake Michigan at our doors, affording us a cheap and abundant means of transportation to good markets for the products of our timber, and plenty of men among us ready to buy it from us. We have made the most of it, and our county derived a large revenue from that source, giving us the opportunity

to support our families while clearing the land, and the means to start our farms. But, gentlemen, that state of things is fast changing. The larger portion of our marketable timber has been cut, at least in portions of the county where farming is carried on to any extent, and considerable has been destroyed by the large fires of 1871. The revenue from that source is rapidly diminishing and within a few years nearly every cent of money that comes into the county will have to be taken by the farmers out of the soil in the shape of grain, stock, and other farm products, and now I would ask our farmers and business men, if it is not for our common interest to try to develop the resources of our farms to the utmost...(*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874s).

Ed Bach, founder and president of the County Agricultural Society, was quite likely the author of the piece. Bach was well known in the county for his progressive views on farming. George Wing credited Bach with the advancement of agricultural practices in the county, not just through the Taylor & Bach show farm but through lobbying and direct effort. Bach invited his neighbors and other interested parties to evening readings of the latest papers on agriculture at the Carlton store, and before long the farms around Carlton were “the best in the county” (Urban 2004). If Bach was not the author of “Words of Truth and Soberness,” his thoughts were certainly running along the same lines, and had been for some time.

Months earlier, on February 27<sup>th</sup> of that year, residents of Green Bay saw a curious sight at the railroad yards: “...an entire saw mill, consisting of engine, boiler, smoke stack, shafting, pulleys, carriages, belting, &c., &c., being loaded on to platform cars...”. Taylor & Bach had shut down and sold their mill, having “sawed up all the pine in [their] vicinity.” Their mill was purchased by Hubbard & Wood in Chicago and taken by railroad to Michigan. The line of sleighs hauling the mill’s components thirty miles overland from Carlton to Green Bay must have been impressive. The reporter noted that the mill had “made several nice fortunes for previous owners, and is now taken to another State, where our best wishes go with it that it may do as well there” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874c).

The closure of the mill did not mean that Taylor & Bach were out of the lumber business. Rather, the distances from which wood had to be procured made it more efficient to mill wood at Tisch’s Mills or other inland mills along the East Twin River. Timber was still coming in. In late March, with the mill either in or on its way to Michigan, one Joseph Pelzak brought in a load of ties—an occurrence noted only because Pelzak decided to get drunk at a tavern near Piwrenc’s grist mill, about six miles west of the pier. On the way home, he fell and got tangled in the sleigh, was dragged for two miles and died. Carlton’s no-saloons policy, reinforced by a strong Temple of Honor society, helped avoid similar incidents closer to home. Large animals, heavy loads, sharp tools, and alcohol were not a good mix (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874d, 1886j, 1943).

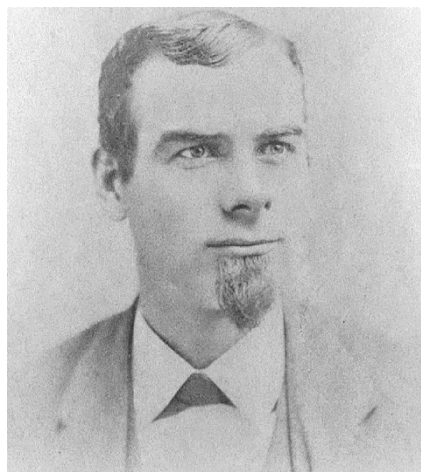
Ed Bach spent 1874 exploring options, managing the lumber complex and farm, and dealing with various minor but annoying matters. Over the winter, he reached out unsuccessfully to the War Department, with the aim of bringing a signal station to Carlton. He wrote to the Superintendent of the telegraph company asking what they would charge to send daily weather reports, but found their reply of \$10 per month unacceptable (the figure is equivalent to just over \$262 per month today) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874f). The store and pier were still doing “good business.” The

farm had grown to include 200 acres under cultivation, 85 head of cattle, 65 sheep, and eight horses (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874o).

In August, all of that wealth proved too tempting. A team of burglars struck the store at Sandy Bay before moving northward in the night to the Taylor & Bach store at Carlton. Unfortunately for them, Fred Bach was living in the upper story. He woke up to noises in the night and got up to investigate. When his eye caught sight of a ladder through the window, he realized what was happening and snuck out the back door to the workmen's quarters. The workmen surrounded the store but found that Bach had scared the thieves away (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874j). The year's excitements closed out with news that the *Driver* had nearly sunk again (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874m).

## ***The Boom Years: Taylor, Bach, & Co., 1875-1882***

### *Glimpses of Carlton*



**Figure 45: Fred Bach, from *Find a Grave*.**

Ed Bach was almost forty years old. He had set Carlton on a firm financial footing and given it a chance to survive. Like Dean, he began to wonder what else lay out there for him. For the immediate future, he and Taylor decided that the work at Carlton might be better done by younger hands and minds. A new employee named Fred Taylor arrived to take charge of the books. Given that his home address was Evanston, Illinois, he was possibly a relative of J. V. Taylor sent north to learn the business (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877h).

Fred Bach and store clerk Wenzel Kieweg purchased quarter-shares in the business, now under the name of Taylor, Bach & Co. The new partners, described as “energetic, reliable young men”, were well-known to the firm’s customers and were friends with many (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875a). Fred Bach had not been very interested in the business at first, but came around and soon shared his brother’s ambition. A surviving photograph

of him as a younger man depicts a man with an intense and piercing gaze, brows slightly furrowed in what might be worry or mischief, and just the faint hint of a smile ready to erupt through an outwardly stern demeanor (Figure 45). He was, to all accounts, a man of sharp mind.

The announcement of the change in ownership was followed very swiftly by another, of equally great import. Taylor, Bach & Co. planned to add a cheese factory to their complex (*Ahnapee Record* 1875b; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875d). Cheese was an emerging industry in Wisconsin, and Kewaunee County lay on the northern fringes of the expanding cheese production region around Sheboygan. Just eight years after Wisconsin’s first commercial cheese factory was established in Fond du Lac County, Taylor, Bach & Co. put Kewaunee County on the path to commercial dairy production (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1939).

In late March, a spring storm rolled through Carlton. A bolt of lightning struck the telegraph line near the Sandy Bay pier and blew thirteen telegraph poles out of the ground. The current flowed along the wires to the telegraph offices at Two Creeks and Carlton and set them on fire. Fortunately, workers at both locations were able to put the fires out before much damage was done (*Manitowoc Tribune* 1875).

Not long afterwards, Ed Bach, his wife, and their five children left Carlton for a new home in Evanston. By then, Fred Bach and Wenzel Kieweg had faced their first test as partners when one of the workmen's houses caught fire. The workmen escaped with at least some of their possessions. The building was insured (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875c). With Kieweg running the store and taking care of shipments and deliveries, Fred set about arranging everything else. The next order of business was the pier, which needed work again. The pair made plans to demolish and completely rebuild the 'bridge' portion that arched over the beach and to "overhaul" the rest (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875c). The store was repainted and refurbished yet again (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875p).

Fred made a trip south to learn about the cheese business, and came back with plans for a facility that could accommodate the produce of 600 cows and a price point that would lure in local farmers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875o). The strategy was simple. Farmers would bring in their milk, and the firm's bookkeepers would total up how much credit they accrued over the course of the dairy season. At the end of the season, accounts were settled, providing windfalls to the farmers and ease of accounting to the partners (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943).

Another change of major importance impacted Fred Bach's life that year. He proposed to Emogene A. St. Peter, daughter of Antoine St. Peter, one of the county's first settlers. The proposal was accepted, and Fred Bach—the bachelor who once slept above the store—became a family man living in a beautiful home in the midst of a thriving business.

Edward Bach kept his hand in that business, though from a distance. In September of 1875, likely still thinking about his brother's close call with the thieves the previous autumn, he bought a watch dog in Chicago and had it sent north. John Whitaker and the staff at the *Kewaunee Enterprise* gleefully reported on the events that followed. Kieweg decided to test the four-footed employee by replicating (*sans* ladder) the attempted break-in. In Whitaker's telling,

...he went to the back door of the store and made a noise and then ran away; but running did not answer and he had to face about and plead his case. He was very eloquent, and managed to escape so that he sits at his meals, but he will try no experiments and his confidence in the dog for the future will remain unshaken (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875r).

The account was accompanied by a very good illustration depicting Kieweg being chased up an apple tree, "minus the broadest part of his unmentionables, which the dog had in his mouth...". However, Whitaker carved the scene on soft wood that wore away during the print run. The editors explained the situation to their amused and confused readers the following week,



...By the time half of our edition was worked off there was nothing left of the picture but Mr. Kieweg and the dog and Mr. K. looked like a Central American tarantula and the dog like a Kewaunee saw-horse. We have no Carlton letter this week, and it is not difficult to divine the cause. We suspect that Mr. Kieweg has mercilessly butchered our correspondent in cold blood. True, there was no justification for the act, but the provocation was great, and the jury which finds him guilty will doubtless commend him to the mercy of the court. We regret our correspondent's fate, much as he deserved it...(Kewaunee Enterprise 1875s).

Whitaker sent a rejoinder the week after, reporting that he had pled his case with Kieweg and was "a living monument of his kindness." The dog, however, had forgotten his duties and broken into the sheep pasture, killing several of the flock. Fred Bach handled the situation. Whitaker solemnly conveyed the news that "...his canine majesty was led forth to execution. He is dead—a terrible warning to all dogs that are inclined to be ambitious" (Kewaunee Enterprise 1875t).

The loss of the sheep stung. Fred Bach had already decided to sell the flock, and they were gone by early October. The proceeds were used to buy dairy cows, and every dead sheep reduced the number of cows they could buy (Kewaunee Enterprise 1875u). Construction of the cheese factory began the following month (Kewaunee Enterprise 1875w).

Whitaker's dispatches to the *Kewaunee Enterprise* said little about lumber that year. Work on the pier was, however, still ongoing. That summer the complex had its first reported on-site work-related fatality. Peter Hilts, a 22-year-old laborer, fell off the pier and vanished. His body turned up in the lake the following week (Kewaunee Enterprise 1875p, 1875q). That fall, instead of railroad ties or tanning bark, Taylor, Bach & Co. sold and shipped grain (Kewaunee Enterprise 1875v).

An annoyingly incomplete portrait of Carlton in late 1875 exists in the form of the first plat map of Kewaunee County (J. Knauber and Co. 1876) (Figure 46). Though the Taylor, Bach, & Co. land holdings are shown, Carlton itself is missing. Only one building—possibly the store—is depicted on the map at the southwest corner of Lake and Lake Shore Roads. The ravine, stream, and mill-pond are not shown. The pier is denoted by a "T"-shaped symbol, slightly south and east of the intersection. The words "cheese factory" float in space north of the label for the store, with no building symbol associated.

The modern configuration of roads was largely established by that point. Away from Carlton, the map depicts a closely-spaced string of farmhouses running west along both sides of Lake Road. Worker Charles Arpin lived on one of the farms; his son Alfred had gone off to the lumber camps. The word 'Hotel' appears north of Lake Road approximately one mile inland, on land owned by Stephan Seidel, who had moved to Carlton shortly after the Great Fire. Seidel worked for the firm for several years before retiring to the life of a farmer. Taylor, Bach & Co.'s extensive farm is there, as is Whitaker's farm. Antoine St. Peter's farms (two parcels are shown) are depicted about a mile and a half south/southwest of the pier. Other parcels bearing the Taylor & Bach name are scattered in the interior, intermixed with private farms and timberlands owned by George Pfister or Pfister & Co., owners of the Sandy Bay pier two and a half miles south of Carlton.



Figure 46: Dean's Pier/Carlton on the 1876 Plat Map of Kewaunee County (J. Knauber & Co. 1876).

The various descriptions of the community that appear in the pages of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* and other newspapers help to round out the picture. By the mid-1870s the community included the Bach home, sufficient housing for farmhands, teamsters, pier workers, and clerks, the store, the cheese factory, the two-story granary and equipment building, stables, barns and storehouses, a wagon shop, and a blacksmith shop, all arrayed along Lake Shore Road or between the road and the edge of the lake bluffs. The Wisconsin census for 1875 shades in the further detail that Wenzel Kieweg, Fred Taylor, and Fred Bach lived in adjoining homes (Wisconsin State Census 1875).

In the store were a telegraph and post office, overflowing shelves and counters, and many different kinds of merchandise. On the upper story was living space. A wagon road extended along the north side of the ravine from the vicinity of the store to the bridge pier. Telegraph poles marched along the side of Lake Shore Road, which was lined with board, rail, and new wire fences. The store and residential homes were made of good milled lumber, painted—in at least some cases—a shining white. Around them were open fields of hay and grain, orchards, pastures where dairy cattle grazed, and rows of poplar and other shade trees.

Whitaker's 'From Carlton' columns for 1876 contain general mentions of comings and goings, and accounts of Fred Bach and Kieweg's newest ventures and aggravations. Shipping started in April. The schooner *Experiment* arrived to load grain and the schooner *Driver*, rescued from her late autumn dunk in Lake Michigan, picked up tanning bark (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876d). The store, staffed by "attentive and obliging salesmen," was restocked with "new goods at low prices" in May (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876e). A shipment of haying implements arrived at the store in July (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876j). In September, lightning struck the stovepipe of a workman's home in the middle of the night, knocking the stove three feet sideways and sending its covers flying. Somehow, the workman slept through it (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876n).

The pine may have been cut down in the vicinity of the pier, but wood was still coming from other species and quarters. In late August Whitaker reported that wood, ties, and other products were being shipped as fast as they could be carried on the pier. The lumber business, the fall's mercantile trade, 1876's abundant harvest, and the running of a new wagon shop that sold "all kinds and sizes," kept the employees of Taylor, Bach, & Co. hopping. It was good, Whitaker said. "They ought to be crowded in that way" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876f, 1876k, 1876q).

Most of the local attention, however, was focused on the new cheese factory (Figure 47). That spring, Fred Bach hired cheese maker Albert Taplin. He came up from Sheboygan County to find a "convenient and scrupulously clean" establishment. Local farmers weighed their options. What would sell for more at market? Butter or cheese? Bach and Kieweg bet that cheese would win out and ordered a huge supply of cheese boxes (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876e, 1876g, 1876k). Soon, cheese was being boxed and shipped. Samples were sent to stores in Kewaunee, and a notice was placed in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* inviting people to try it (1876i). Visitors that stopped by the cheese factory to take a taste judged the product to be very good, and the factory itself to be high quality (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876l). Though the type of cheese is not specified in contemporary accounts, it is likely that they were producing full cream cheddar, and certainly were doing so by 1882 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883a). At the end of the year, cheese was shipped to Chicago and Evanston, where it was "rated first class in all respects in the markets...and commanded the highest price" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876t).

Bach, Kieweg, and the senior partners toasted their success. Taplin was invited back for another season. The cheese maker had already made friends amongst the residents of Carlton, and they were glad he would be returning (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876o). De Wayne Stebbins, a correspondent with the *Ahnapee Record* who had ties to Langworthy Pier, toured the Carlton area and gave his ideas about what the future held:

Taylor and Bach, at the Carlton pier, have perhaps the largest and best stocked farm in the county. This season they have gathered into their spacious store houses two hundred tons of hay. Their store appeared to be doing a brisk business. Bark was coming in lively. At this point the firm have recently opened a cheese factory, and we learn are meeting with good success. An indication is manifest on the part of several farmers in the neighborhood to go into the dairy business, and it is probable that Carlton will evidently become a dairying town (*Ahnapee Record* 1876h).



Figure 47: Farmers with milk wagons at a creamery in Wisconsin, ca. 1876 (Wisconsin Historic Image 27226).

Things continued along the same course in 1877. The winter season brought more loads of lumber, at one point averaging \$400 worth of forest products daily (over \$11,000/day in modern currency) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877f). In mid-April, three “large” ships loaded simultaneously at the pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877k), though their names were not given. The lumber shipping season lasted late into the year, with almost all their stock shipped out by November 2nd (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877z). The store did a steady business as well, and was spruced up yet again with new plaster, new paint, and another coat of whitewash (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877y). The *Kewaunee Enterprise* was full of little snippets advertising goods for sale at the Carlton store that year: boots, shoes, suits, bonnets, etc. (e.g. *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877k). The farm’s roadside rail fences were replaced with modern wire (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877j).

There were comings and goings. Fred Taylor, their bookkeeper for the prior two years, went back to Evanston (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877h). John Peters, a stonemason in their employ, struck out on his own (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877k). John Dishmaker, Jr., oldest son of John Dishmaker, Sr., moved to Carlton and took a position as a clerk (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1920a), though he—like his father—had much if not more interest in mechanical things. Taplin returned to start up the cheese factory in mid-May. The Carlton partners expected heavy trade, and had given it a new coat of lathe and plaster, along with “fixing up things generally” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877k). The firm of Hlawcek & Grun set up a warehouse at Carlton to sell agricultural machines (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877dd). Perhaps the most important new resident at Carlton that year, Alva Lewis Bach, was reported on by Whitaker in September.

Last Sunday Fred Bach wore a nine by fourteen smile and appeared to be supremely happy. As he met us we inquired what was the cause of his joy and he told the whole story thus: “Don’t you know the cause of my joy? Why, it’s a ten pound boy!” He laughs and cries and often hollers, and beats ‘em all, I’ll bet ten dollars. May Fred’s declining years be made happy by goodly number of “handsome ten pound boys” -John (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876n).

As with the previous year, in 1877 the news from Carlton rarely failed to mention cheese. By late June the factory brought in 2,500 pounds of milk per day (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877n). By late July, Taplin used that milk to turn out 270 pounds of cheese each day (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877r). Production wrapped up in early November, and Taplin headed home to Sheboygan County (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877aa). The last known shipment to leave the pier in 1877 was not wood nor grain, but 3,000 pounds of cheese and a “quantity” of butter (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877gg).

Whitaker supplied a detailed overview of the year’s business in mid-November of 1877, and the account was impressive:

Taylor, Bach & Co. have now finished their farming operations for the season, and last week with our usual enterprise we obtained the following figures of their season’s work for which we thank Fred Bach, the gentlemanly business manager for the firm here. During the cheese making season they made 33,000 pounds of cheese, which required 334,653 pounds of milk, for which they paid \$2,655.24. Of this amount, their own cows—thirty-nine in number—furnished 126,163 pounds, which is an average of 2,285 pounds to each cow; which, at 80 cents per hundred pounds; would make \$25.88 to each cow. They also made 800 pounds of butter from the same cows before and after the cheese making season. They have a farm of 200 acres, the crop from which was: wheat, 2200 bushels; barley, 582 bushels; pease and oats, mixed, 1,300 bushels; hay, 250 tons. They sold during the summer 24 head of young cattle and 15 calves. They have 90 head of horses and cattle now, and 30 hogs. They also shipped during the season 2,000 cords of wood, 1,300 cords of bark, 45,000 ties, and 22,000 posts. The whole of the work on the farm and piling of all the wood, ties, etc. was done with four horse teams. We doubt if any of the scientific managers that we read about can show a better record of the season’s work. The past summer has been a poor one for dairying, as the pastures were so dry and the feed so short that the cows could not give only a small amount of milk. They have their yard clear of trees and wood, their store is stocked with fresh and choice goods, which they are selling at bottom rates. The firm is a reliable and enterprising one and deserve success, and we are glad to know that they are enjoying it. John. Carlton, Nov 13, 1877 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877bb).

The rather dry account succeeds in capturing the firm’s drive and productivity, and their importance to the residents of southern Kewaunee County. Their pivot to dairy paid off handsomely. In modern currency, Taylor, Bach & Co. distributed over \$75,000 to area farmers in return for their milk. They made over \$730 in modern currency per cow in their own pastures, for a



total of no less than \$28,470. Whitaker's figures, illuminating as they are, do not capture the profit gained from selling all the cheese, nor the cattle, the calves, the wood, the bark, ties, posts, grain, or hay, nor do they cover the costs of shipping, feeding the livestock, paying the workmen, and so on. It is clear, however, that things were going very well indeed.

Whitaker's other dispatches to the *Enterprise* in 1877 went past numbers to capture the atmosphere of Carlton and the character of its residents. In his telling, it was a joyous, busy, innovative place, full of men with too much to do and still, somehow, slightly too much free time on their hands. Whitaker covered each of the prominent citizens of Carlton in their turn that year.

Kieweg's newest time in the spotlight lent him a bit more dignity than his adventure with the watchdog had. The primary worry early in 1877 was the drought mentioned in Whitaker's year-end accounting. Fires were running in the woods by June. Memories of the Great Fire of 1871 and the fire of 1864 were strong. People living in the interior started to evacuate. Just as before, inland stockpiles of timber and lumber went up in flames. Kieweg headed out to investigate and was trapped. Spurring his horse forward, he galloped through the inferno. "His hair, whiskers, and the horse were singed," Whitaker reported, "but he got through" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877m). Fortunately, the fires died out before they reached Carlton. Kieweg also spent some time indulging in a short-lived national fad. A book published the previous year had made the startling claim that light that passed through blue glass was able to cure illness (Pleasanton 1876). Soon, blue glass was being either employed or mocked across the United States. Whitaker did not specify which side of the line Kieweg fell on, and just said that Carlton couldn't be said to be behind the times (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877g).

Fred Bach contended with messy customers. Though Whitaker's column is very light on detail, his account seems to imply that one could buy lunch at the store as well as boots and shoes. Patrons, it seems, had gotten in the habit of quietly tapping the syrup and molasses casks to season their food and were leaving sticky traces behind on the sales counter and other store goods. Bach found one bold customer using a new broom as a molasses dipping stick and confronted him, starting an argument that culminated in Bach calling the man "too pure for this earth" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877f). Bach also put his inventive side to work that year, fashioning a "bathing rig" out of clothesline and cedar posts. The result was a rudimentary life preserver he used swimming in Lake Michigan late that summer. Whitaker described Bach's appearance as a "South Sea Islander, fitted up for a war dance" when he wore it (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877t).

Taplin the cheese-maker took the most abuse. Whitaker praised his willingness to help "fair young ladies" empty their milk cans when they brought them to the factory, and noted how helpful he was by taking the reins next to them and driving their wagons back through the entrance afterwards. However, Taplin and the ladies sitting snug beside him tended to drive in circles around the outside of the factory for some time before he remembered that he had other duties and went back to work. Taylor, Bach & Co., sprang for a milk wagon for the factory, possibly to help Taplin stay on track. It made its appearance in Whitaker's correspondence when the horse, charged by a passing goat, "immediately got up a strike and went to destroying property." Whitaker reported that the runaway bolted, damaged the wagon, and "completely demoralized the milk cans" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877s).



Mid-year, Whitaker, tongue-in-cheek as always, gave his impression of the three men's standing with the community:

From Carlton: ...Wenzel Kieweg has gone right on and measured 100 cords of bark daily, and nobody found fault with the measure. Fred Bach has shaved his chin, wears a standing collar, and pays out cash for bark and smiles on his landy customers in a manner creditable to a bank cashier or one of those immaculate young gents of the city that wear square-toed shoes and part their hair in the middle...Al Taplin has manufactured 200 pounds of cheese daily, overcome his modesty and become a great favorite with the ladies (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877q).

John Dishmaker, Jr. (Figure 48) did some experimenting of his own in the spring of 1877.

Johnny Dishmaker has got a steam engine that he made himself, and it is a good piece of work. He had a boiler, too, but he lost it. It happened thus: One pleasant evening last week Johnny and Al Taplin planted it by the side of the mill pond and fired it up. It worked nicely and all the boys were in high spirits. Johnny plugged up the safety valve and Al fired it up a little more, when there came a sudden change in the programme and a corresponding change in the looks and positions of the spectators. The boiler burst with a loud "bang". The ashes, steam, and hot water flew in every direction while the boiler mounted above earthly things and went in the direction of the moon. When the steam had cleared away a great change had taken place in the crowd. Johnny had taken a position in the mill pond and was declaiming in an earnest manner on the beauties of hot water and ashes. Mr. Lager had entrenched himself under the waste gate, and Al Taplin, the "handsome cheese man" of a year ago would not have been recognized by his most intimate friend. The boiler didn't hit him but a stream of hot water struck him directly under the narrative of his coat and about a panful of ashes went into his face and eyes. What he said about engineering we have not got time or space to repeat...the fancy steps he made while the unmentionable part of his pants was cooling off would shame a ballet dancer. He soon repaired himself with a cool suit and was all right, but his best friend could not induce him to go through with that fancy dance again (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877l).



Figure 48: John Dishmaker, Jr. from *Ancestry.com*.

The air of general chaos that permeated Carlton that year even extended to the sailors who visited. The schooner *Driver* arrived in August on one of her runs to pick up goods and her crew set to brawling after a drinking bout. Given that Carlton was dry, the sailors either brought the liquor in on the schooner or made a trip inland to one of the interior taverns. "Result," Whitaker said, "one of the participants had a full sized mansard roof built over one of his optics and was otherwise damaged" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877u).

This was the high point of Whitaker's gibes at Carlton and its residents. He received his own comeuppance in September of 1877, when he got a finger pinned helping Fred Bach's father-in-law Antoine St. Peter hang a barn door. Whitaker begged for help, finding himself fastened painfully though harmlessly to the barn. Instead, the aging St. Peter fetched a scrapbook holding every one of Whitaker's missives in which he had personally featured.

And he took that book and deliberately read all those jokes to John, and asked him what he thought about them after mature reflection. John's replies, though prompt and energetic, seemed to have no particular relevancy to the subject...(*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877v).

Whitaker's columns lacked their former zest for a while afterwards.

Whether Taplin had enough of Dishmaker's engineering or Whitaker's wit, or whether Taylor, Bach, & Co. wanted a cheesemaker with his mind on business rather than the eligible ladies of the neighborhood is unknown, but the "handsome cheese man" did not return the next year. Instead, T. O. Eastwood of Manitowoc County was hired to take charge (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878e).

The 1878 season started with the usual news that "large quantities" of timber products were arriving, despite paltry snowfall (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878b). The schooner *Driver*, helmed by Capt. S. Marshall, kicked off her Chicago to Carlton to Chicago rounds in April (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878f) and continued them through the summer and fall (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878p, 1878t). The only maritime incident of note occurred when a sailor left his foot in the space between the pier and the *Driver* slightly too long, with regrettable results (*Kewaunee Enterprise*, 1878u). Taylor, Bach, & Co. shipped thirty-five cargoes, averaging one or more cargoes per week (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878x). Just where the wood was coming from was hinted at by one short note that stated that farmers from Gibson, across the line in Manitowoc County, were hauling ties ten or more miles to the pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878r).

Farmers closer to home were thinking about dairy, rather than wood. By the end of May 1878, 3,000 pounds of milk were arriving each day. One month later, the total had jumped to 5,000—doubling their intake compared to June of 1877 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878m, 1878o). The year's final figures were just as promising. All told, Taylor, Bach, & Co. paid the local farmers nearly \$198,000 in modern (2023) currency and oversaw the delivery of 825,000 pounds of milk to Eastwood and his assistants. They, in turn, delivered 75,000 pounds of cheese to Taylor, Bach, & Co. (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878v). "Considerable quantities" were shipped from Carlton to Chicago. However, in a sign that the smaller community was losing lake traffic to its larger neighbor, the bulk of their production was taken to Kewaunee and shipped from there (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878s). The firm was lauded both for the quality of their cheese and for their foresight. Their decision not only provided a steady income stream for themselves, but for the local population. Taylor, Bach, & Co. paid high prices, and the farmers only had to deliver the milk and leave the work to others (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878s). Whitaker summed it up when he noted that "Mr. Eastwood is busy and Wenzel smiles" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878o).

On the mercantile front, the store's business had outgrown the store. Fred Bach decided that they needed a larger storeroom. He designed it himself ("a sure promise that the design will be ornamental," claimed Whitaker). The addition measured 12 by 80 feet, delivering a not inconsequential 960 square feet of storage space, not accounting for shelves or racks (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878m). The firm added another clerk named Peter Hyak to help with the increased workload (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878y).

And what was inside? Whitaker reported on that as well.

Fred and Wenzel with their assistants have been busy for the last week unpacking and piling on their shelves their stock of new goods. Their stock embraces articles so elegant and costly that none but a millionaire or newspaper correspondent could afford to buy them, as well as those that are practical and cheap enough for common people. On their counters we noticed overcoats, as soft as velvet and as warm as the love of a bride, piled up near horse blankets as stiff as a Presbyterian uncle, and as cold as charity, ladies' hats as lovely as a June rose by the side of a plain head. Ladies' head gear trimmed in the most artistic manner and as lovely as a June rose; boot packs as big as a muck scow and warranted to throw the wearer as high as the Republican ticket went this fall the first hour, if there is only a little snow; elegant jewelry, costly chronometers, mirrors that will show you a good looking face every time you look in them, and in fact, you can find anything you want there. If you don't believe it, go and see for yourself (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878w).

And there were other notable additions. Little Cora Mae Bach arrived to more celebration in Fred Bach's household at the end of March. In November, Fred Bach added an ice house to the complex (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878w). 1878 brought a rare glimpse of the senior partners down in Evanston as well. Ed Bach had a thriving fence post dealership, employed a staff of eighteen men, and lived with his family in a "fine new home." Francis Bach was pregnant again. Son Harry Bach was born a week or so after the news of their Evanston idyll reached Kewaunee. Taylor spent his time on the lumber market, and kept his hand both in banking and vessel ownership (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878n).

The final arrival in the community in 1878 was not a welcome one. The specter of epidemic disease always hovered over Kewaunee County. Newspapers of the day carried frequent rumors and reports of smallpox, scarlet fever, typhus, cholera, and other deadly ailments, sure-fire home remedies and miracle cures, and memorials to the dead. Diphtheria was a winter companion along with falling snow and freezing winds. The bacterium that causes the disease spreads through droplets, and produces a toxin that damages and kills tissues in the respiratory tract. Victims suffocate, or die as the toxins invade the heart or kidneys. It had ravaged Carlton's children the previous winter, and Whitaker's dispatches to Kewaunee in the diphtheria season of 1877–1878 were somber as the death toll mounted:

We append a list of deaths...since our last letter; Anna Stelzer, 6 years old; John Huber, 7 years; Fanny Cosel, 8 years; --- Hanna, 4 years; --- Fisher, 5 years; --- Fisher, 3 years; Fred Miller, 20 years, Antoinette Messman, 3 years; Minnie

Messmann, 2 years. There are yet many sick and unless some change in the weather—or some other aid can be secured that will conquer it we fear that it will spread to an alarming extent (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877ee).

The pestilence returned in the winter of 1878–1879. In February of 1879, diphtheria invaded the Bach household. Whitaker’s report was terse: “Alva, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bach, died of diphtheria to-day” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879c). Fred and Emogene Bach lost their firstborn, and surely despaired for tiny Cora, who had not yet reached her first birthday. To everyone’s relief, she survived.

Fred Bach had ample opportunity to lose himself in his work afterwards. There was plenty to be done. Winter’s snow also meant that teams were arriving. Matthias Rudebeck, a hauler for Taylor, Bach, & Co., set records with a load of 85 cedar ties and another of hemlock that weighed 5.5 tons, hauled twelve miles over rugged terrain from the timberlands west of Carlton (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879b). Fred Bach was concerned about the state of the pier, but the shipping season was upon him before repairs could be started. By late March timber was moved onto the pier “at a lively rate” and April saw cargo after cargo loaded and shipped south (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879d, 1879e).

In early April, in the midst of the rush, a massive day-long gale struck Lake Michigan. The schooner *Ironsides*, yet another of Taylor’s vessels, was caught alongside the Carlton pier halfway through loading a cargo of 6000 ties. She lost her rudder and went ashore (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879f). A tug was sent for. The tug (either the *Satisfaction* or *Protection*) brought a steam pump. The ties were tossed off the ship to lighten her and the *Ironsides* was pulled back out into the lake with minimal damage (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879g).

Kieweg was still taking in approximately 500 ties a day when repairs started on the pier. One loader took an unexpected swim in the lake, but otherwise the work progressed smoothly. As before, the wood was coming from the far extent of the pier’s reach—Mishicot, Franklin, and Gibson, Wisconsin—traveling fourteen miles or more (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879j; *Algoma Record* 1915a). Tanning bark arrived as well, and quantities picked up in late June (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879k). The *Driver* (Figure 49) continued her rounds, with “a good season’s work on hand to clear the yard” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879j). Each round trip took approximately four days (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879l).

While the cheese factory was made ready for the season, Fred Bach and “the boys around the store” spent evenings at the lake. Bach purchased a seine net, so as to “rope in the fresh fish at a lively rate” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879h, 1879j). The cheese factory was under new management again. Eastwood was out, and a new cheese-maker named Nic Kuffan was in (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879i). Kuffan is mentioned in a later account as inspecting ties brought to the pier, so may have worked for the firm prior to his elevation to cheese maker (*Algoma Record* 1915a). Alternately, he may have played multiple roles in the complex’s operation. Though milk and cream prices dropped in 1879, Taylor, Bach, & Co. paid out the equivalent of nearly \$19,000 (in 2023 currency) in July alone. As the *Kewaunee Enterprise* (1879m) noted, the local farmers would have had to bring in and sell 700 bushels of wheat to equal that income.

In 1878 Whitaker had penned a glowing description of the Carlton store. In 1879, he provided the readers of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* with a broader view of Taylor, Bach, & Co's holdings:

The residence of Mr. Bach is on an elevation, from which a splendid view of the lake and surrounding country can be had and is in the centre of a large park of trees—Lombardy poplars—whose tops point heavenward with more beauty than the modern church steeple. Apple trees with limbs bent down by the weight of delicious looking fruit; plum trees well filled with large and luscious looking plums, and pear trees; while the veranda that covers the front and entrance to this home of contentment is covered by trailing and well-filled grape vines; the flower garden contains a rich and large collection of flowers that indicate that the owner is fond of the beautiful. The firm of Taylor, Bach & Co. own this property, together with over 500 acres of choice farming lands. Their large store is always well stocked, and they do a large business. They keep nearly fifty cows and run a cheese factory. Their hay crop this year will exceed 200 tons, and they will thresh nearly 3,000 bushels of grain. They employ to manage their farm five horse teams and twelve men. They are assisted in the store by John B. Dishmaker, who can sell goods in seven languages. The resident members of the firm, Messrs. Bach and Kieweg, have worked their way to their present position by dint of years of patient toil and economy (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879n),



*Figure 49: The schooner Driver, from Historical Collections of the Great Lakes, Bowling Green State University.*

This was the last of Whitaker's substantial portraits of the firm. He left Kewaunee County, much to his friend's dismay and to the detriment of later historians. The bright light that shone on Carlton and its residents flickered and faded.

### *Carlton in 1880*

The little hamlet on the lakeshore entered the 1870s as a mill complex. It entered the 1880s as a dairy and mercantile center. Thriving farms spread across the burned and cutover land. The regional newspapers carried accounts of social gatherings, theatrical productions, debate societies, election campaigns, church socials, school competitions, and 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnics. New revenue streams breathed renewed life into Carlton. The company expanded the store and earned a reputation for honest dealing and good prices. They turned the company farm into a model of agricultural progress and possibility. The agricultural census for 1880 estimated the value of the farm at \$12,800 (nearly \$400,000 in modern currency). The partners paid out \$1,258 in wages in 1879 and harvested \$3,004 worth of crops (over \$91,000 today). Forty cords of wood were cut from the farm's woodlots, and the 1879 harvest brought in thousands of bushels of oats, wheat, barley, and potatoes. They owned ten horses, five sheep, six hogs, a herd of forty-four dairy cattle, sold off a small herd of beef cattle, and produced and sold (to themselves) 28,565 gallons of milk (United States Census 1880).

The milk was taken to the cheese factory. The manufacturing schedule for 1880 indicates that the company invested \$400 in it in 1879. It employed two men—Kuffan made \$1.28 per day, and his assistant made \$0.35. That put the modern equivalent of \$5.00 per hour in Kuffan's pocket (assuming an eight-hour day), a low figure made more palatable by benefits like free room and board. In 1879, the factory took in over half a million pounds of milk from 240 cows and converted it into 56,617 pounds of cheese (United States Census 1880).

And through it all the distances from which lumber had to be procured grew longer and longer. The forests were far away. Carlton's lumber trade approached the end of its reach. Still, Carlton was in a more comfortable position than its nearby counterparts. Five other surviving private commercial piers extended into Lake Michigan from Kewaunee County's eastern shore, not counting those at Kewaunee and Ahnapee/Algoma: Sandy Bay, Grimm's Pier, Alaska Pier, Langworthy (also known as Casco Pier), and Foscoro. Most were in their final years of life. For Carlton, 1880 brought continued prosperity, if also a bit of overcrowding. Cheese maker Nic Kuffan boarded with Wenzel Kieweg in a home that included Kieweg's wife Rosa and their four children. Next door was the Bach home, shared between Frederick's family (Fred, wife Emogene, and three children), clerk John B. Dishmaker, Jr clerk Joseph Schultz, and Fred's elderly mother Theresia. Theresia Bach is, oddly enough, listed as a servant. Nearby, in his own home, was blacksmith Anton Kindl (U. S. Census 1880).

The elder Dishmaker was still living in the Town of Pierce, where he operated a blacksmith and wagon shop that employed three men (United States Census 1880). Shortly after the census-taker passed through, John Dishmaker, Sr. and wife Anna (Figure 50) left Casco and came to Carlton with their family. There, Dishmaker Sr. took over the wagon making business. He had a stellar reputation for hard work, high-quality, and honesty, and his workers sold wagons as fast as they could make them (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880g). Photographs of Dishmaker capture a solidly built, square-jawed man with a bushy, downturned mustache and a solemn expression (see Figure 44). In temperament he was frugal and inclined towards simple living. He also cared deeply for those around him—his wife, his children, his friends, and his fallen comrades (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1920b).





**Figure 50: Anna Bach Dishmaker, from Ancestry.com.**

As for Anna—wife to John, sister to Frederick, daughter to Theresia, and mother to many—little is known about her. The women of Carlton are briefly mentioned in their roles as wives, mothers, and daughters, usually in connection with social events, schoolwork, domestic matters, or players in a humorous account. Anna is a slight exception. By the time she and her husband moved to Carlton, she had seen her husband and brother march off to war, buried two children, and borne eight others. A photograph of her as a younger woman captures an inner strength mixed with thoughtful apprehension. In another taken in her later years, when she was known to the residents of Kewaunee as “Grandmother Bach”, her face is relaxed, kindly, and proud (see Figure 44). Her “forceful character, helpful teachings, and watchful care” are credited as one of the factors in her family’s success. When she passed in Kewaunee in 1915, her funeral was attended by hundreds (*Algoma Record* 1915b).

Frederick’s wife and Anna’s sister-in-law Emogene St. Peters Bach (Figure 51) may have shared many of the same traits. Emogene’s face hints at the same force of character and watchfulness, and it is tempting to wonder whether the two women clashed or became even more powerful working in concert. The more immediate impact of the Dishmaker’s arrival was a sudden and dramatic increase in the number of children living in the heart of Carlton. The community was on the cusp of a generational shift.

Senior partner J. V. Taylor was on his way out. As the decade got underway, he sold all of his ships except the *Driver* and prepared to leave vessel ownership behind him on the path to retirement (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880e). Elder brother Edward Bach and family were comfortably ensconced in Evansville, far from the physical toil of Carlton, but a move to the Dakota Territory was not far in their future. John Dishmaker, Sr. and Anna were 41 years old, Wenzel and Rosa Kieweg 38 and 36, respectively, and Frederick and Emogene Bach 34 and 21 years old. All except Emogene, who married young, were in or approaching what, at the time, was middle-age. Accounts of the community begin to refer to an evolving array of new clerks and employees. Like Dishmaker, Jr. and Kuffan, they were all in their late teens or early 20s. It was a sign of things to come.



**Figure 51: Emogene St. Peters Bach-Kieweg, from Ancestry.com.**

That year’s lumber season started off well (*Algoma Record* 1880a). Kieweg took delivery of ties and tanning bark at a steady rate—including an impressive 2,800 ties in one day in early February (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880b). Using Rudebeck’s noteworthy 1879 load of 85 ties as an upper limit, and 1870’s “average” load of 25 ties as a lower limit (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870b), this figure suggests that between 30–100 teams arrived in Carlton before everyone called it a night. The farmers and teamsters, traveling longer distances to deliver those loads, encountered greater

hazards. In the case of Frank Pishka, who brought ties from the Town of Franklin, the danger was self-imposed. He lost control of his team after stopping at a saloon on the way home and was badly injured (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880j). Shipping was underway by April and Kewaunee County's diminishing forests resumed their slow relocation southward (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880f).

The cheese factory, still managed by Kuffan, boasted a new well (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880d). The firm's herd totaled around 50 cows (*Algoma Record* 1880j). Over the course of the year the factory purchased over half a million pounds of milk, paying out over \$117,000 dollars in 2023 currency. Though the amount of milk taken in increased compared to 1878, the price paid per pound of milk (around \$25.50 in modern currency) fell (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880o). The quality of the cheese remained "excellent" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880k).

A brutal wave of dry cold closed out the year, freezing the roads into ridges and ruts and stopping traffic (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880p). The number of deliveries to the pier yards fell off sharply (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881a). By the end of the month, however, enough snow was on the ground for sleighing to resume. Teamsters and farmers with wood to sell flocked towards the lakeshore. An observer in Norman, five miles west of the pier, reported that haulers took ample advantage of the better traveling:

...as many as thirty loads of forest produce in succession were counted here one morning. But to a person who is defendant in a law suit, or to one driving to see his mother-in-law for the last time and has no time to spare, meeting this long train of vehicles and obliged to see them pass without himself being in motion, it is the longest and most obnoxious minute in his life....(*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881b).

The snow kept falling, and falling, and falling. By early March, Carlton was buried so deeply that even sleighing was impossible. Twelve feet of drifting snow blocked the roads and smothered the farms. One area farmer had to dig a tunnel between his barn and well to water his stock. It was big enough to drive his horse through with three-feet of headroom to spare (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881f). Winter dealt a further blow late that month, when high winds blew lake ice into the pier and ground 100 feet of it into splinters (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881h).

The season's worst misfortune struck before the snow shut Carlton down. Dishmaker, Jr. headed out into the fields searching for stump wood to carve into knees (braces) for a small boat. He bored a hole into a good stump, filled it with gunpowder, put in a plug, and was drilling a second hole for the fuse when the powder ignited. The plug shot out like a bullet, striking him in the wrist. He ran the quarter-mile distance back to the store holding the severed arteries in his damaged wrist closed with his other hand. The frantic activity at the store when he arrived bleeding and powder-burned can only be imagined but calls for help were put out immediately. A doctor was on scene within a couple of hours. Though badly hurt, he did recover (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881e).

While the snows melted and their clerk convalesced under his parent's care, Fred Bach and Wenzel Kieweg found themselves with full yards and a pier 100 feet shorter than it should have been. The *Driver* arrived for her first pickup of 1881 in late April (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881j). She continued her rounds throughout the season (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881i, 1881n, 1881o).

1881p, 1881s, 1881v, 1881w, 1881x, 1881aa). Pickups and deliveries were delayed somewhat in June when the *Oneida* collided with her and attempted a hit-and-run off Sheboygan. Captain Page of the *Driver* lashed the two ships together while presumably giving the captain of the *Oneida* a tongue lashing of his own. The conjoined vessels headed to dock, where \$100 worth of damage to the *Driver* (nearly \$3000 in modern currency) was repaired (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881n, 1881o). The *Driver's* last recorded trip of the season took place in late September, when she dropped off 200 barrels of salt (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881bb).

The *Driver* and other vessels came and went while Fred Bach set about having the pier repaired. Never one to let an opportunity pass, he arranged a couple of improvement projects as well. First, the store needed attention. New stock was carried into the storerooms in June, to be sold at “remarkably low prices” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881p). Additional shipments came in at regular intervals until the store was “chokefull packed” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881s, 1881t). Fred Bach hired the services of a mason named Gallenberger to underpin the structure with a new and better foundation (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881t).

With that underway, it was decided that the pier needed a grain warehouse. One was quickly erected in September of 1881, in time for the harvest (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881y, 1881z). Enough wheat was produced locally, and demand for a closer shipping point was high enough, that buying from the local community at “a good price” seemed a good idea (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881aa). Other agricultural products were moving across the battered decking of the pier as well. Kuffan resumed cheese-making in early May (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881k). Five-thousand pounds worth of their “excellent” cheeses were shipped out in late June (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881q, 1881r). The firm imported 800 cheese boxes from Two Rivers in early July to resupply (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881s). That August, loaders carried 12,000 pounds of cheese onto ships at the pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881v, 1881x).

Another glimpse of the farm was published in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* in late July:

It is interesting and to a considerable degree amusing to take a gaze on Taylor, Bach & Co.'s farm, when all hands and machinery are in operation. The firm own a farm of about 400 acres all under cultivation, worked by a force of fifteen men and all the latest improved labor-saving machines. A mower on one side of their extensive farm, several rakes on the other, their hay fodder, their hay unloading apparatus, their self-binder, all seen in operation present a view in a vast degree like that of our western farms, but on a smaller scale (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881u).

## ***Branching Out: Bach Bros. & Kieweg, 1882-1886***

### *Norman*

In February of 1882, two more dispatches were sent from Carlton to the *Kewaunee Enterprise*. The first brought news that Taylor, Bach, & Co. was opening a second cheese factory in Norman, a tiny community in the western portion of the Town of Carlton, on land owned by Thomas Hlawecek

(*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882a). In fact, the firm was planning an entirely new branch location, encompassing both cheese factory and store. The second dispatch brought news that Taylor, Bach, & Co. was no more (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882b).

J. V. Taylor retired. The firm was dissolved and reorganized with Ed Bach as the senior partner. Fred Bach and Wenzel Kieweg remained junior partners, but in practice ran the business on their own. Taylor and his wife Mary went on to live for a time in Chicago before returning to Evanston ca. 1893. She was at his side when he passed away on his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday, in their apartment in the Greenwood Inn (Unknown 1903).

The reorganized firm faced difficulties. The same column that brought news of their new name also noted that farmers living west of Carlton were taking their tanning bark a substantial distance overland to Two Rivers where they could get better prices (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882b). Other cheese shops had opened in Kewaunee County. Sheboygan and Manitowoc Counties were becoming major cheese producers, affecting both regional and wider markets. Wood was getting even harder to find and had to travel further and further to be pried.

Though the financial situation was worrisome, other news was good. John Dishmaker, Jr., now recovered, courted and married Augusta Peters in 1882. In 1883, the farmers of Carlton harvested 40,000 bushels of wheat and other grains, made 12,000 pounds of butter (some via a creamery in Kewaunee), and sold enough milk to create 60,000 pounds of cheese. The livestock value in the Town of Carlton, in aggregate, was estimated at \$50,000 (nearly \$1.5 million in today's currency) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1884e).

Fred Bach and Wenzel Kieweg were not sharing in the general success and were determined to do something about it. The partners put a new, larger pan in the cheese factory in Carlton. The amount they were able to pay their customers was flagging, as was the price they were able to sell the cheese (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882d, 1882e). In February, 1883, the *Kewaunee Enterprise* carried a detailed breakdown of their Carlton dairying operations. The firm was down to 38 cows, which had produced an aggregate of \$46,752 worth of milk (2023 currency) the previous season. Milk production was not a year-round affair in the 1800s. Local herds started producing milk in May (9,307 pounds delivered to the factory), peaked in July (27,899 pounds), and ceased in November (2,847 pounds). After that, the cattle saved their energy for the winter. And they were good cattle. Bach boasted that there was a long waiting list for their calves, sired by a recently purchased bull of Durham/Dairy Shorthorn stock. They sold 36 calves in 1882, bringing in \$122 (just over \$3,500 today).

The account, supplied by Fred Bach himself, contains hints of other problems. Bach admitted that they had not done their best in 1882. The weather forced a late start to cheese-making, and their cows were "somewhat neglected by not receiving the proper attention" due to "a press of other business." Nearby farmers were obtaining \$50–\$55 worth of milk per cow, compared to the \$42 gained by Bach Bros. & Kieweg. In modern currency, the firm's herd underperformed by over \$200 per cow. They were falling behind the times with regard to the cheese-making as well. The market wanted cheese made with a "Young American Cheese Press," which they did not have. Bach estimated that they lost a penny per pound as a result. Given that year's production of 60,000 pounds of cheese, the difference accounted for over \$17,000 in modern currency (*Kewaunee*

*Enterprise* 1883a). As if these problems were not enough, a storm damaged the pier again in the spring of 1883, causing further expense and setting off a scramble to repair it before shipping commenced (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883d).

Somehow, wood continued to come in. The firm brought in large quantities over the winter. They had “immense quantities of fine maple wood and railroad ties” stockpiled in their pier yard at the start of the shipping season (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883d). The *Driver*, stalwart carrier of their wood, was sold upon Taylor’s retirement. She continued to sail the lakes under different owners until 1901, when she waterlogged, capsized, and sank off the coast of Michigan (Gerald C. Metzler Great Lakes Vessel Database 2023). Without her, the firm relied on contracts with Lake Michigan’s fleet of lumber carriers, such as the schooner *Arrow* (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883f).

The branch cheese factory, to be situated near a competing store at Norman, a few miles west of the Carlton pier, had yet to open. Cheesemaker Jason Rogers was slated to take charge of it. In the interim he ran the Carlton factory while Kuffan handled other tasks (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883h). In June, the *Algoma Record Herald* reported that John Dishmaker, Jr had purchased an interest in the branch store opening in Norman and would fill the manager’s position there. The reporter also claimed that Fred Bach and Wenzel Kieweg were selling out. The pair supposedly intended to take a “prospecting tour” through Dakota Territory (*Ahnapee Record* 1883h). The year had been stressful, and Bach and Kieweg might have been forgiven for seeking a new start in greener pastures. But the rumor was just a rumor. The partners stayed in Wisconsin.

1884 brought better luck. Dishmaker, Jr., wife Augusta, and Jason Rogers moved to Norman and inaugurated their new branch business. Kuffan returned to his prior position as cheese maker of Carlton (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1884d). Bach Bros. & Kieweg sent teamsters out into the interior to pick up wood, and gladly welcomed farmers who delivered it themselves (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1884a). Carlton experienced a small hardwood renaissance. The lumber markets in Two Rivers still posed a threat and some farmers took their ash, elm, maple, and oak the longer distance south rather than selling it for lower prices at Carlton. Even so, by the end of February, 1884, the Carlton pier yard was stuffed full of ties, posts, and cordwood brought by farmers “from far and near” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1884b).

The shippers had to contend with the usual issues. The steambarge *Hilton* carried for the firm in 1884, getting an early start in the first week of March. It was a bit too early. An ice field caught her and pushed her nearly onto the beach near Two Creeks, just south of the Kewaunee County line. Her captain was forced to wait until the melt truly set in, then called a tug to free her (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1884c). She returned weekly through the shipping season, crossing paths with the Goodrich steamer *Corona*, which had scheduled stops at Carlton twice a week. The *Corona* was engaged in the passenger and packet trade (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1884f). In May, Fred Bach likely took passage on her when he went south to purchase goods for the firm’s general stores (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1884d).

Changes marked 1885, with a general reshuffling of clerks, cheese makers, and managers. Kuffan, who had married Louise Waegli, sister of the manager of the Sandy Bay and Two Creeks piers, left for Chicago. He returned to Kewaunee a year later, taking positions in various mercantile companies before becoming the pier master for the Goodrich Co. (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1940). He

was replaced in Carlton by 28-year-old Alfred Arpin, son of former pier worker and employee Charles Arpin (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885e). Charles farmed nearby. Dennis Arpin, Alfred's 25-year-old brother, relocated from Norman in September to take charge of the Carlton store's stock (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885h). A clerk named Anton Shultz managed the Norman branch store while Dishmaker, Jr. was away "on business" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885m, 1885n). The Wisconsin census for that year places Wenzel Kieweg, Fred Bach, and blacksmith Anton Kindl in adjoining homes, and the Arpins nearby (Wisconsin State Census 1885).

Bach and Kieweg bought Holsteins, and Holstein calves were offered for sale to area farmers that spring (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885b). Dairy prices went back up. The Carlton cheese factory regained its position as "one of the best paying institutions of this kind in this county" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885f). Alfred Arpin turned out an "A No. 1 cheese" which sold in the southern cities for a good profit. When cheese production wound down in early November, Arpin transitioned the factory to creamery operations in order to wring every last penny out of the local cows (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885j).

Most of the year's published news revolved around late-season shipping. This was as much a result of the particular interests of the revolving stable of local columnists who supplied items to the *Kewaunee Enterprise* before losing interest again as it was to the year's particular events. In September, the schooner *E. R. Blake* picked up cedar ties and the schooner *B. F. Wade* loaded more. The steamer *Corona* dropped off school supplies (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885h). Shipping was heavy in October. "Many cargoes of grain and ties" were shipped each day. The *Corona* couldn't accommodate the freight. The steamer *Chicago* was summoned to assist, loading "quite a large" amount of grain and cheese. The schooners *White Oak* and *Radical* carried ties (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885i). The *Radical* made return trips in November, picking up multiple loads of cordwood, hemlock ties, and cedar posts, assisted by the schooner *Carrie*. In December, the propellor *DePere* loaded multiple cargoes of grain and cheese (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885j, 1885l, 1885m). The lake refused to freeze, though the pier was "like a skating rink" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885n).

The *DePere* exchanged "considerable" merchandise for more grain just before Christmas and brought more stock for the firm's stores in January 1886 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885o, 1886b). The merchandise that arrived on the pier was divided between the two stores. Inventory bound for the branch store in Norman was received by another store clerk named H. Cohlman before the new year and by Anton Shultz afterwards.

Cohlman moved to Shawano County to open a store of his own (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886a). In Carlton, inventory was shelved by clerk Joseph Shultz, Anton's brother. Joseph had a difficult year ahead. In March, 1886, suffering from simultaneous cold and toothache, he endured having seven teeth pulled (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886j).

Two busy stores sold a lot of merchandise. Fortunately, the shipping season opened early again. The steamer *DePere* continued to carry the store freight, exchanging it for "produce for Chicago" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886j). The *DePere* nearly lost the pier in winter fog on her first delivery in February (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886f). The firm had a procedure for just such instances. The lost ship sounded a horn or blew a whistle to alert workers that they were nearby in the murk. Someone

on shore then ran to the end of the pier and blew a horn of their own while hitting the pier planking with a heavy piece of wood. The sound guided the ship in close enough to see, and then to tie up (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943). The *DePere* returned to drop off “an unusually large amount” of goods in February, “a considerable quantity” in early March, made her “usual trip” in mid-March, and delivered a “large quantity” in late March (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886g, 1886h, 1886i, 1886j).

In May 1886, the steamer *Corona* returned and dropped off merchandise for Norman, but not all of it was marked for Bach Bros. & Kieweg. The firm’s short experiment in Norman was over and they had decided to sell out. C. M. Koutmek & Co. bought the branch store and imported goods of their own (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886l, 1886m). Clerk Anton Shultz returned to Carlton to resume duties at the main store. His brother Joseph, in the meantime, was integrated more fully into the firm’s business. Kieweg and Joseph Shultz set up a private telegraph line between their homes, to “practice” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886m).

### *Alliances*

In 1886, J. McChanan of Sheboygan Falls bought the Bach Bros. & Kieweg dairy herd for \$756 (around \$24,000 in 2023 currency) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886l). As in 1882, the partners had other things on their minds, and presumably felt that having a herd of their own was no longer necessary to keep the cheese factory running. It was one less thing to worry about. As cows left, fish came in. Carlton’s residents pulled “many valuable loads” in at the pier. Whether they did so with Fred Bach’s seine net or with gear of their own is not specified, nor is where the fish were sold (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886m).

The aging pier was busy that season. While the younger residents fished, lumber piled up. After a slow start, sleigh loads flowed in. Wood kept arriving via wagon into June. The pier—now a patchwork of rebuilds and repairs—required further work. Ernest Warner, who had come to Carlton with the Feldman family before the Civil War, had taken a job with the firm,. Under his guidance 7,000 ties were stacked on the deck planking waiting to load by late April (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886d, 1886e, 1886n, 1886q). Twenty-year-old Fred Dishmaker, John Dishmaker Sr.’s second surviving son, assisted with the repairs and cleaned long-lost axes off the lake bottom while doing so (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886s). Fred took after his father and older brother. In January he made his own steam engine and boat, though without any reported explosions. The finished steam launch was described as a model of its kind and “a credit to so young a mechanic” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886d).

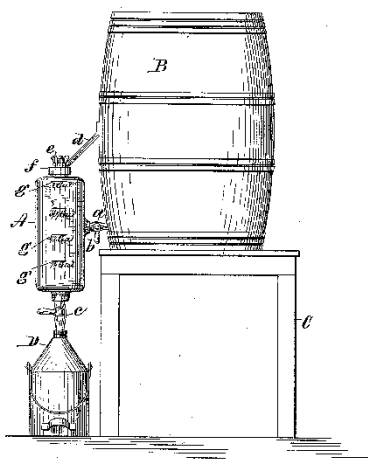
The schooners *Helen* and *E. P. Royce* loaded wood, cedar ties, and posts in April (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886k). The steam barge *Grace Williams* stopped by for wood in May (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886m). In June, the schooner *A. Bradley* loaded ties, the schooner *L. B. Coates* picked up cedar, and the steambarge *C. P. Heath* took on posts (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886p, 1886q). The steamer *Sheboygan* dropped by on her way north in late April (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886k). The steamer *Corona* made Carlton a regular weekly stop on her south-bound leg and dropped off passengers on the way north when needed (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886m, 1886p). One day in late June saw 150 people lined up on the pier waiting for the *Corona* to deliver passengers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886r). On another northerly leg the *Corona* picked up a “large quantity of oats” for an unknown destination further up the lakeshore (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886q).



1886 saw very little discussion of cheese. The operation seems to have coasted along under Alfred Arpin's continued guidance, pulling in a little less milk than usual—probably due to the loss of the Bach Bros. & Kieweg herd's contributions (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886r). The Norman factory was sold to the firm of Kautnik & Schauer in June (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886o). The biggest development involved the cheese maker, rather than the cheese factory. Love (or at least tolerance) had blossomed amongst the curds. Arpin, now 29 years of age, married Wenzel Kieweg's 19-year-old daughter Katharina that spring, linking two more of Carlton's families. John Dishmaker, Sr. officiated at the nuptials (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886l).

(No Model.)

F. BACH.  
 DEVICE FOR MEASURING LIQUIDS.  
 No. 329,427. Patented Nov. 3, 1885.



Witnesses  
 H. M. Bradley  
 Matthew Robinson

Fred Bach  
 Inventor  
 By Erwin C. Caudish  
 Attorneys

**Figure 52: Bach's Liquid Patent Measure, Patent US329427A Nov 3 1885. Google Patents, accessed February 2023.**

As exciting as the marriage was, another development dominated the year's schedule. In 1885, Fred Bach had put his inventive side to good use tinkering with a way to measure out liquids from wooden casks. Perhaps his earlier experience with the greedy customer, the broomstick, and the molasses cask spurred his interest in the problem. He applied for a patent on his new "device for measuring liquids" and received it in November of 1885 (Bach 1885; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885k) (Figure 52).

What came to be known as the "Bach Liquid Measure" consisted of a clear glass measuring container. An attachment on the upper surface of the container allowed it to be secured to a wooden cask in a way that lined up the cask's tap and an opening on the side of the glass container. A handle and valve allowed the flow of liquid from the cask into the container to be controlled. Oil, kerosene, molasses, or other liquids were allowed to run into the container until the desired amount was reached, then the flow was shut off. The clear measuring container allowed the quality of the product to be examined as it was being measured. The lower surface of the container was shaped like a funnel and had another valve and handle that permitted the measured product to be dispensed into portable containers for customers. A correspondent who examined a prototype reported "That there is money in the invention we have no

doubt and we hope it will make the inventor rich" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886c).

Bach improved on his invention as winter wound down (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886d, 1886j). Edward Bach, who had moved his family to the Dakota Territory, welcomed a visit from Fred Bach and Dishmaker, Jr. in April. Though they doubtless had much happy catching-up to do, the

purpose of the visit was a business proposition (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886k). When the pair returned to Carlton with Fred Bach's 23-year-old nephew William in tow in mid-May, they had a contract with a Minneapolis glass manufacturer for an initial run of 5000 measures. The device was reported to meet "with the general approval of all dealers" and was in "great demand" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886m). William set out for Minneapolis just over a month later to oversee production (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886r).

Rumors of an impending move to the Dakota Territory rose up again. This time, there was reason to believe them. Bach and Dishmaker made arrangements to enter into the lumbering business in the Territory during their spring trip west, had family and friends there, and openly talked about relocating. Kieweg was to remain behind in sole charge of the Carlton business (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886t). It didn't work out. Dishmaker went west to scout things out. Dishmaker came back, "not very favorably impressed with the prospects of the country." Fred Bach called the whole thing off (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886u).

### ***Beginning of the End: Bach, Kieweg, & Co. 1886-1893***

John Dishmaker, Jr.'s visit to the Dakota Territory was not entirely in vain, however. Edward Bach formally retired and sold Dishmaker his stake in Bach Bros. & Kieweg. Ed Bach lived a comfortable life with his family in South Dakota for many years before developing kidney disease. He suffered a stroke as a consequence of his illness while on a trip to New York state and passed away there in 1901 at the age of 66. The younger Dishmaker was represented by the "& Co." in the new firm name (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886u). Joseph Shultz left for Kewaunee, to take the dual positions of store clerk at Mashek & Metzner and pier clerk at the Goodrich Transportation Company office (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886v).

From this point forward, Carlton slowly fades from local newspaper coverage. It appears here-and-there, often in short notes that reveal that the firm's lumber trade was still struggling along. One such note, written in January 1887, is typical:

While taking a trip around the town last week, we stopped at Bach, Kieweg & Co.'s store and were more than surprised to see the large trade that those gentlemen have. Their stock is complete and they seem to be selling at very low figures. Several of our Franklin farmers are hauling ties, posts, and bark to the above named firm (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887a).

That things were progressing as well as they were is a testament to the partner's drive and ingenuity. There was a reason, for example, for the emphasis on telegraphy practice among the firm's employees and family members. After their private system was linked to the main line, Fred Bach and his successors eavesdropped. They were listening for commodity prices from the Chicago exchanges and the city markets. It was good information for the firm to have in their pockets. The employees also intercepted messages sent by lake captains, including those employed by the Goodrich line. When a Goodrich captain on the southbound leg felt that his cargo hold was at or near capacity, he would stop at Sturgeon Bay and message Chicago that he intended to skip less important stops like Carlton. If there was cargo waiting to ship, clerks alerted Wenzel Kieweg and he grabbed sons John and Anton, rushed them to Kewaunee on the lakeshore road, and

dropped them off at the Goodrich office. The boys then bought tickets back to Carlton, forcing the steamers to stop so their father could talk his cargo on board, which he generally did (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943).

Shipping diminished and the farm downsized, and manpower became another issue. Employing a large standing force of laborers without the mill and with a smaller farm was not cost effective. Fortunately, the partners had an established deal with the local neighborhood. When a ship came in and help was needed to unload it, whoever was on the pier rang a loud bell installed there. It could be heard “for miles around”. The firm paid 20 cents per hour to men who answered the call, “and there was never a lack of help” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943).

The spring of 1887 brought a good business in railroad ties, at least when the roads weren’t swamps (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887b, 1887c). In the summer, the little hamlet saw an influx of visitors from Milwaukee, Chicago, and other southern cities, taking advantage of the Goodrich line and the “beauties of country life” available at Carlton (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887d). The cheese factory continued to make and sell cheese. Ships continued to pick up forest products and drop off goods for the store. The farm, though diminished, was still a showpiece. Wenzel Kieweg, now the oldest member of the firm, had taken charge of it.

The firm of Bach, Kieweg & Co. of Carlton own one of the most productive farms in Northern Wisconsin. Up to a short time ago, this firm kept a large number of cattle on their farm...this firm, besides keeping a large supply of hay for themselves, sold 100 tons of hay to their customers...This company still owns about 200 acres of land...The farm is run under the able management of Mr. Kieweg, the senior member of the firm, and we believe we are safe in asserting that he is one of the best informed and most practical farmers in the county. The boys working for the firm claim that Mr. Kieweg is pretty good anywhere, but on the farm he seems to be hard to satisfy...(*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887e).

Kieweg took inspiration from W. D. Hoard, the father of Wisconsin’s dairy industry. Hoard visited the Farmer’s Institute in Kewaunee County, and exhorted Kieweg and others in the audience to “churn your heads!” In other words, he asked farmers always to think about why they were doing what they were doing and to find the most profitable way of farming at any given moment in any given season (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887e).

The firm also bought produce from the surrounding region, and the shipping notes for the latter half of the year focus more on farm products than forest products. The *Kewaunee Enterprise* reported that “Mr. Kieweg, who does most of the buying, complains considerably of old age [he was 45]. We are of the opinion that there is a good deal of old age in a few thousand sacks of peas, especially if we had to handle them” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887g). Grain still was being bought and shipped out in mid-November (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887k). John Dishmaker, Jr. was busy as well. He had taken on the job of managing the store and “attending to customers during the day time” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887n).

The year ended with one final attempt to ship wood. The schooners *Christiana* and *Exchange* wound up taking refuge in the harbor at Kewaunee while storms blew through and ice formed

around them. The *Christiana* made Carlton eventually, while the *Exchange* tried but had to turn back (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887l, 1887m).

In 1888, the propellor *Ludington* loaded freight for Bach, Kieweg & Co. in Kewaunee, testifying to the county seat's growth and the impact it was having on nearby pier communities (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888a). Kewaunee's well-funded and continually improving harbor made it a far more attractive landing place than the small, exposed bridge pier at Carlton. The *Ludington* attempted another landing at Carlton in late March but was turned back by ice (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888c).

Mercantile business and agricultural shipping occupied the majority of the firm's time, though the lumber trade still limped along. The notes from Carlton revolved around the store and exports of farm products. In late May, the firm announced that they had purchased a new hay press and intended to ship hay "on an extensive scale" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888f). By the end of the year, they were exporting hay bales along with peas and other produce (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888k).

The firm's dairy operations expanded too. Alfred Arpin returned from the interior of Shawano County, where he spent the 1887–1888 winter season working as a lumberman for Emogene Bach's brother, Charles St. Peters (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888d). The milking season ramped up slowly, but receipts of milk soon exceeded the previous year. Fred Bach attributed the increase to the wider rise of dairy farming in the region and specifically called out better pasturage and more cows. Soon, the factory was running at full capacity and taking in 4,000–4,500 pounds of milk per day (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888e, 1888g). Supply overtopped the firm's ability to purchase.

The partners decided that they needed a larger factory. The new building served as a creamery as well, so that it could be run year-round (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888h). Work on the two-story factory was underway by fall. Upgrades included "grout" construction (a mix of lime and gravel) and a "fine iron roof" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888i, 1888j) (Figure 53).

The new cheese factory/creamery ran "at full blast" by early June. It had competition. A farmer's association (the Carlton Dairy Association) built their own factory nearby and purchased nearly as much milk as Arpin did (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1889a). Other cheese factories were scattered across the county, and some of the firm's competitors were doing big business. Even so, a breakdown of Kewaunee County's cheese manufacturing published in July, 1889 put Carlton in a leading position (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1889b). The cheese making season, when it ended, was deemed a "very profitable one" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1889c).

And still the timber trade continued. In early 1889, Bach, Kieweg & Co. were doing "a rushing business" in timber products. The yard was filled and their prices were high. Each bit of lumber in their yard, however, represented a tree no longer standing. The recently-rebuilt dam for the old mill pond failed, releasing its water into Lake Michigan (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1889a). It may have been a harbinger. The following decade saw the lumber yards emptied for the last time as well.



Figure 53: The 1890s grout cheese shop at Carlton, courtesy Kewaunee County Historical Society.

### Carlton in 1890

Carlton entered the 1890s as a tiny, modernizing village full of energetic young men and women. It boasted daily mail (Fred Bach was the postmaster), a telegraph office (Fred Bach was the agent), a new telephone line, the cheese factory, the blacksmith shop, and the general store (*New Era* 1891). *Polk's Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, published in 1891, gives the population of the village as 50 (*Polk's Wisconsin State Gazetteer* 1891:380). The oldest Dishmaker and Kieweg children were in their early 30s or late 20s, and most of the rest of Carlton's younger generation were in or entering their teens. John Dishmaker, Jr. and Augusta Peters were parents to four young children, including a pair of twins. Fred Dishmaker married Mary Kuhlman in 1888, and a family lay in their immediate future. Alfred and Katharina Kieweg Arpin had three children of their own. The adult sons, under their fathers' tutelage, were being groomed to take over the firm. Some of the daughters kept an eye on how things were run as well.

The new cheese factory with its two vats did stellar business. Each day in July, 1890, Arpin bought 8,000 pounds of milk and produced 700–800 pounds of cheese (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1890c). Over the course of the season Arpin and his workers received over 1.1 million pounds of milk from 368 cows, made and sold over 106,000 pounds of cheese, and added a quarter of a million dollars (in 2023 currency) to the pockets of 51 local farmers. F. C. Paulu, their best supplier, made \$11,439 that year (in 2023 currency).

The firm once boasted of the high price they paid for milk. In reality, as more and more farmers turned to dairying, the supply of milk rose and prices fell. Ten years earlier in 1880, the firm paid 84.5 cents/100 pounds (around \$24 in modern currency). In 1890, the price paid had fallen to 68.4 cents/100 pounds (just over \$22 in modern currency). Four other cheese factories were at work in the Town of Carlton, though an anonymous local cheesemaker thought that the market could

sustain ten more. Where Arpin set Carlton apart was quality. The firm produced 1,964 boxes of Young American cheese, 318 boxes of ‘Twins,’ and 90 boxes of cheddar. American cheese required more processing and reduced the yield of cheese to milk, but brought a higher market price.

Higher market prices for cheese and lower payouts for milk increased profits for the firm (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1891a). The store was doing an “immense business” and the store and warehouse were “filled from cellar to garret with goods of almost every description” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1891e). The prosperity that the factory, store, and farm brought them is evidenced by the fact that the firm paid twice as much tax in 1891 than the next nearest payer in the Town of Carlton—\$184.36, or over \$6,000 in modern currency (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1891c).

That year the Kewaunee newspaper mentioned that yet more tourists from Chicago were taking the Goodrich line to Carlton and other ports, looking for quiet, cooler places to spend the summer (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1890b). Another potential source of income stared Bach, Kieweg & Co. in the face, but this time their intuition failed them. They remained preoccupied with general goods, the farm, and cheese even as Wisconsin’s fledgling tourism industry tested its wings.

### ***The Next Generation: Bach, Kieweg, & Poser 1893–1903***

#### ***Truth and Soberness and the Railroad***

The reality was that Carlton was changing. The county was changing. The entire lakeshore was changing. Farmers who settled in the thickly forested region around Kewaunee, and who once gladly sold their timber to the lumber dealers, now had to buy wood for their stoves from the county’s outlying areas—the same regions supporting the final moments of the lumber industry in Carlton (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1888b). The timber was finally and truly running out. The steam barge *D. W. Powers* attempted to pick up “a cargo” at Carlton in May of 1890, but had to run for the shelter of Kewaunee harbor before she could do so. The nature of the cargo is not specified, but it was early in the season for most agricultural products (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1890a). The first cargo of ties for the 1893 season didn’t ship until the end of May, loaded onto the schooner *Emeline*—a far, far later start than in earlier years. The stockpile may not have been large enough to warrant shipping until that point (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1893d). In the spring of 1895, the last cargo of any kind shipped from the pier, carried by the steam barge *Pauly*. The *Pauly* picked up wood and ties, but the amount did not fill her hold nor her decks, so she steamed north to Kewaunee to gather more (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1906e).

Years earlier, Ed Bach foresaw the end of the lumber boom. He gambled that cheese and grain would bring continuance to his business and income to his extended family. The cheese factory was doing well enough, but the farm was not what it once was and the timber was gone. The Carlton store was still going strong, but there was a new development for everyone to consider—the railroad had come to Kewaunee County. It had not come to Carlton. Instead, the line ran east from Green Bay through Luxemburg to Kewaunee and its publicly-funded harbor, then on to Ahnapee/Algoma and Sturgeon Bay. The residents of Carlton—both village and civil town—knew what that meant.



Almost a decade earlier, in 1885, the county voted on a proposal to extend the railroad line along nearly the same route. The larger port cities and the areas most likely to be on the line voted in favor. Carlton, Pierce, and other rural towns voted heavily against. They did not do so entirely because they would be bypassed. They did so because they relied on lake traffic, and lake traffic couldn't compete (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885o). Trains weren't stopped by lake ice. They didn't bounce holes in their hulls when the waves rose up, blow onto beaches, or sink. They ran through wind and storm every season of the year. Any customers within manageable travel distance of businesses on the railroad line would go there instead. As Decker and others noted years before, the railroads promised faster transport to market and lower prices for manufactured goods. Carlton's store was well within Kewaunee's expanding reach.

Fred Bach, Wenzel Kieweg, and John Dishmaker, Jr. must have discussed the situation together along with their extended families many times. By then, that number included clerk Charles Peters, who had married Nettie Dishmaker—daughter to John and Anna Bach Dishmaker and sister to John Jr., Fred, and Charles Dishmaker. In 1892, Fred Bach made a decision. He left Carlton. Bach purchased interest in a gristmill in Kewaunee, where business prospects were better. He moved his immediate family there and took up management of the mill. Instead of being invigorated by the new challenge and environment, however, he quickly fell ill (Beers & Co. 1895:581–582).

As his health faltered, Fred Bach pulled back from the gristmill business and connected with a familiar resident of Kewaunee who could help him secure a long-term future for his family and friends. John Dishmaker, Sr's brother-in-law Fred Poser worked as a blacksmith for Dean & Borland until the end of the Civil War, then moved to Kewaunee and founded a successful smithy and wagon shop. Poser's son, Fred Poser, Jr., was 35 years old in 1893, and a "businessman in every sense of the word" (Beers & Co. 1895: 503; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1931). An upright man who had worked his way up through the firm of Joseph Duval & Co., one of the leading mercantile firms in Kewaunee, the younger Poser was held in high esteem in Kewaunee. Fred Bach proposed a new partnership, which both Kieweg and Poser, Jr. accepted. Poser, Jr. stepped down from Joseph Duval & Co.

Soon, a "new and magnificent building" was rising in downtown Kewaunee under the name Bach, Kieweg & Poser, Co. (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894c) (Figure 54). The local paper avidly followed the progress of construction of what was called "one of the most ornamental buildings in the city" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1893a, 1893b, 1893c, 1893e, 1893g, 1893h, 1894c). The two-story brick department store opened on October 5, 1893 to much fanfare. It encompassed grocery, clothing, hardware, dry goods, and other departments, and employed no fewer than eight clerks (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894c).

Fred Bach was president of the new firm. He must have breathed a sigh of relief when the doors opened to the public and Kewaunee's eager and numerous customers streamed in. The Dishmakers and Kiewegs moved to Kewaunee, where they built grand homes for themselves and their families. The pier, store, and farm that launched their careers were turned over to the next generation.





Figure 54: The Bach, Kieweg & Poser, Co. store in Kewaunee. Goods visible in the window displays include cloth, fashionable women's clothing, cast iron stoves, tableware and cookware. Image courtesy of the Kewaunee County Historical Society.

### *The Branch Store*

That next generation had grown up in and around Carlton. The cheese factory, store, pier, and pieryard were their playgrounds. The old mill pond and Lake Michigan were their swimming pools. Cheese-maker Alfred Arpin and clerk Charles Peters took over the Carlton business, with the help of Fred and John Jr.'s brother Charles Dishmaker. Katharina Kieweg Arpin and Nettie Dishmaker Peters stayed in Carlton with their husbands. Charles Dishmaker was living in Michigan at the time when the turnover happened. He returned to Carlton to take on his new job, riding the last miles between Green Bay and Carlton by bicycle (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1893f, 1894c).

Arpin continued to put his all into the cheese factory as the changes were negotiated. The 1893 season saw him buy 991,304 pounds of milk at a price on par with the high values of 1880, in an attempt to outflank the local competition. In full, the Carlton cheese factory sent the 1893 equivalent of another \$240,000 back into the local economy that year. The firm was somewhat stung by a published claim that another factory was paying farmers better than they were. They disputed the assertion, publicly inviting the managers of the "factory in question" to state how they arrived at a figure that topped Carlton's (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894b). Arpin and Fred Bach headed south to Milwaukee and Chicago in July, presumably to buy merchandise for the stores (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894e).

The biggest story in 1894 was a mysterious customer. One summer's evening in June, a small sloop-rigged yacht landed at the desolate pier. A man walked up the pier road to the store to make



Figure 55: Carlton in 1894 (Rooney & Schleis (1895). Note property and house owned by L. A. Bach along Lakeshore Road in upper right, north of main Carlton complex, and Peter Rudabeck property along Lake Road northwest of the store.

a late shopping run, buying eggs, tea, and “other provisions,” while three others stayed behind on the yacht. After departing Carlton, the resupplied vessel sailed a mile and a half north to the Ernst Werner farm and landed on the beach. They chatted with Werner for a bit, then cooked and ate their dinner before departing again. It was only afterwards that the store clerks and Werner heard that the yacht was stolen and was sailed by four escapees from the Milwaukee jail fleeing to Canada (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894d).

The little port at Carlton was in its last year of life. A portrait of the community is found in the 1895 plat map of Kewaunee County, compiled in 1894 by Rooney & Schleis (Figure 55). The firm’s holdings are noticeably smaller than in the 1870s. Portions of the Taylor & Bach farm are shown under the ownership of Peter Rudabeck, M. C. Paulu, and others, revealing that Ed Bach’s model farm was being carved up and sold off piece by piece. John Dishmaker (Jr. or Sr. is not specified) held title to the area north of Lake and Lake Shore Roads, including former company land along the lakefront. The store is depicted southwest of that intersection, while the cheese

factory appears on the opposite (east) side of Lake Shore Road. The pier is not shown on the map, though it stretched out into the lake in 1895 just as it had before.

Goods for the Carlton branch store came in by rail to Kewaunee and were inventoried at the big store before being shipped the few miles south out of town to Carlton by wagon or sleigh. What timber remained was many miles away and could be transported to railroad stops with equivalent ease. Farm products shipped by wagon and rail as well, with no concerns about weather, ice, or shipwreck. The cheese factory, described that year as ranking “second in the State” (Beers & Co. 1895:582), continued on.

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1896, Fred Bach died. He had been ill for months, unable to leave his sickbed. Even so, no one thought his condition was overly worrisome and his death shocked those who knew him (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1896). He was only 49 years old. It was a hard and heavy blow. Emogene and five sons and daughters grieved a husband and father. Cora Mae, their oldest surviving child, was just 18. The youngest, Edward George, was only seven. Still, Fred Bach left each of them in secure circumstances. The previous year, a short biographical sketch written about him said this:

His integrity has never been questioned, and his word has been always accepted as being ‘as good as his bond’. His business ability and enterprise have been matters of admiration and commendation, and there are few men that stand as high in the esteem of the community as does Frederick Bach (Beers & Co. 1895:582).

Carlton lingered on a deathbed of its own. It turned away from the lake. The store and cheese factory comprised its fragile economic heart. Peters and Arpin made occasional trips into Kewaunee, stopping by the *Enterprise* offices to chat (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1899, 1900a, 1901a; 1902). In April of 1900, as the new century got underway, the firm sold what was left of the farm to Paul Stangel for \$6,400 (equivalent to just under \$228,000) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1900b). The last mention of the firm’s investment in Carlton was installation of a private telephone line between the main store in Kewaunee and the original store, echoing the telegraph lines of years ago (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1901b).

### ***Under New Management: Rudebeck, Son, & Vogl 1903–1908/1909?***

Sold Carlton Interests. By a deal which was consummated the early part of this week, the Bach, Kieweg & Poser company have disposed of their Carlton holdings, the purchaser being Peter Rudebeck. The property consists of the cheese factory, store and other buildings on the premises. The stock of goods contained in the store building were not included in the sale and will be removed in time to give possession of the store to the new owner on the first of August (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903a).

With this announcement, the *Kewaunee Enterprise* informed their readers that the dynasty of business partners that built Carlton was moving on. Arpin, Peters, Dishmaker, and their families started to pack. Their destination was Luxemburg, a small inland community between Kewaunee

and Green Bay. Luxemburg was on the railroad line. It had a future. It was also where Bach, Kieweg, Poser & Co. planned to build a brand-new branch store (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903a).

The next months were devoted to clearing out the Carlton store and cheese factory and making them ready for the new owner. That summer, Charles Dishmaker contracted typhoid fever. His case was severe. As he fought for his life, Alfred Arpin walked out the door of the cheese factory for the last time. The store shelves were emptied. Wagons were packed and sent north to Kewaunee. Charles Peters stayed. He was postmaster, and no replacement had been designated. He remained in Carlton for one month more until the post office was shuttered (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903d; 1943). Dishmaker, when he was well enough to travel, was brought to Kewaunee—presumably to his father’s house—to recuperate (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903c).

After a period of convalescence, Charles Dishmaker joined his partners in a new life at the ‘New Store’ (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1920c). Alfred Arpin, Charles Peters, Wenzel Kieweg’s sons Anton and John, Charles Dishmaker, and Augusta Peters Dishmaker. all worked there at various times (Simonar 2008). Wenzel Kieweg, who remained in Kewaunee with the senior generation and maintained the ‘Big Store’, looked after and guided them all. In later years, Kieweg was described as having an instinct for “selecting industrious, capable young men who developed into successful business men” and was lauded for giving them the opportunity to rise and succeed in the company (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1916c).

In 1906, Wenzel Kieweg’s wife Mary passed away. Just over a year later, Wenzel married Emogene St. Peters Bach, widow of Fred Bach. Wenzel was 17 years older than Emogene, but the two certainly knew each other well, and may have opted for the comfort of familiar company in their later years. Hinting at a happy match, the pair went on a very long honeymoon and sight-seeing trip to the Western United States before returning and starting the new chapter of their lives in Green Bay (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1916c, 1928).

Anna Dishmaker Poser died in early 1911 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1911). Anna Bach Dishmaker, known to the residents of Kewaunee as “Grandma Dishmaker,” passed in August of 1915 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1915a; *Algoma Record* 1915b). Barely a year later, Wenzel Kieweg suffered a fatal stroke (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1916c) and Emogene was widowed a second time.

John Dishmaker, Jr. assumed presidency of the company. The stress was too much. He suffered a nervous breakdown in 1919. A stroke in May of 1920 left him comatose, and he died five days later (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1920a). The loss of his son broke John Dishmaker, Sr. Always a fit and healthy man, he “seemed to lose interest in the affairs of the day” and “began to show evidences of a decline”. He died peacefully of natural causes less than two months later (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1920b).

The Bach-Dishmaker interests were withdrawn from the company, and the firm changed its name to Kieweg Peters Co. (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1920c). Before another year had passed a heart attack struck down Fred Dishmaker, who had gone on to sell windmills and other farm implements under the name of the Dishmaker Bros. Company (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1921, 1943). Former Carlton cheese maker Nic Kuffan helped carry Fred’s coffin to Riverview Public cemetery, where he was laid to rest in the same shaded grounds with Wenzel Kieweg, Fred Bach, Dishmaker’s father,



mother, and brothers, and other former residents of Carlton. Emogene St. Peters Bach Kieweg died in July of 1928, Charles Dishmaker in 1930, and Charles Peters and Alfred Arpin in 1946 (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1930; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1928; 1946b, 1946d). By then, both the New Store and Big Store had faded into commercial history and Carlton had been a ghost port for decades.

### *Rudebeck, Son & Vogl Co.*

While the members of the Bach, Kieweg, Dishmaker, and allied families set up new homes in Kewaunee and Luxemburg, the Rudebeck and Vogl families did the same in Carlton. Peter and Matthias Rudebeck hailed from Denmark. The men—almost certainly brothers—immigrated to Kewaunee County during the height of the lumber boom, and found their fortunes entangled with those of Carlton. Matthias Rudebeck took employment with Taylor, Bach, & Co. as a laborer and hauler, moving record-setting loads of timber to the pier. Newspaper accounts suggest he wavered back and forth between farming and lumbering for much of his time in Kewaunee County (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876s, 1879b, 1879o). By 1900, however, he had left for Two Rivers (United States Census 1900).

Peter may likewise have found employment with Taylor, Bach & Co., since the 1875 state census shows both men living in adjoining households at Carlton with their respective wives and children. By 1895, Peter, wife Anna Christina Anderson, and their three children had acquired a farm, made up in part by former Taylor & Bach holdings along Lake Road west of the pier. They were neighbored by remaining Bach holdings on one side and by Alfred Arpin's farm on the other (Roonie and Schleis 1895).

Just what led Peter Rudebeck to purchase 'downtown' Carlton is unclear. Perhaps it made sense to sell to a local. Perhaps Rudebeck had worked with the Carltonites long enough to step into a leadership role, as Ed and Fred Bach, Wenzel Kieweg, and others had done before. In any case, his family readied themselves to take on the new challenge. Peter put his farm up for sale, and announced that the new store would open with "a complete stock" on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1903 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903e), after Charles Peters finally vacated with the closing of the Carlton Post Office.

Their new business operated under the name of "Rudebeck, Son, & Vogl, Co." Peter took care of the 'Rudebeck' portion of the new company. The 'Son' was Peter's only son Matthias (not to be confused with the elder Matthias), a well-regarded liveryman who lived on the southwestern margins of Kewaunee on—in a happy coincidence—the original Bach homestead. Finally, son-in-law Leo Vogl, husband to daughter Christina Rudebeck Vogl, accounted for the 'Vogl' share. Peter's remaining child, daughter Anna, took a position behind the store counter as shopkeeper.

The small family did their best to emulate the successful strategies of their forerunners. Matthias Rudebeck strung a telephone line between his house and the store, as did one F. W. Sazama (*Algoma Record* 1903b). The Rudebecks ran a large advertisement in the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, boasting of a "fall line of choice goods of large variety, such as are generally carried by first class stores." The advertisement lists items for sale, including kerosene, salt, cloth and clothing, shoes, groceries, candies, notions, cutlery, and "every thing that sells." They were also careful to note that they bought produce such as eggs, chickens, and butter as well. The Rudebeck family, like the

Bachs, made sure to get the press on their side. The paper endorsed their enterprise, presciently predicting that “the prices will be a strong factor in drawing trade” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903f).

The Rudebecks brought in new cheesemakers. Blacksmith Daniel Hardtke took up the blacksmith business (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1905; Wisconsin State Census 1905). In March of 1906, Leo Vogl bought the cheese factory building (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1906a). A subsequent appearance of the store in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* lists the proprietors as “Rudebeck & Co.” hinting that Leo and Christina Vogl sold their stake in the store to make an independent go in cheese manufacture (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1906c). Anna Rudebeck, for her part, was training to become a nurse. Peter did not have the store much longer. In December of that year, he died (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1906d).

The murky history of Carlton’s final years becomes even more difficult to reconstruct at this point. It is clear that the store continued to run, in part with Anna’s assistance. She is recorded as making a trip to Milwaukee to purchase merchandise for the store in January of 1908 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1908). At some point between that date and March of 1910, the Rudebeck and Vogl families sold out to Ernst Peter Edwin Miller. Miller may have gone into debt to Peter Rudebeck’s heirs to purchase the business. It was a bad move for all involved.

### ***The End: Miller 1908/1909 to 1910 and Afterwards***

Miller’s tenure as owner/manager of Carlton was quite short. In February of 1910, the store appears in the newspaper as “Miller’s store,” where the schoolchildren of Carlton picked up examination papers for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade geography tests (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1910a). In March, M. Rudolph Schley was hired as cheesemaker, replacing one A. Brey (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1910b).

The census records for that year list Miller as a storekeeper, living with wife Marcella, daughters Alvina, Margarette, and Helen, cheesemaker Schley, and a servant named Louisa Boddet (United States Census 1910). By the end of the year, Miller was bankrupt. A massive, full-page advertisement in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* told the sorry tale (Figure 56).

E. Miller & Co. overstepped the bounds of judicious financeering, when they bought too heavily. They plunged headlong into one of the most serious predicaments that could befall any firm. The regular receipts of their business were inadequate to meet the demands that were made upon them by their creditors. Nothing was left for them to do, but to submit to the inevitable, and contract with The International Consolidated Sales Co. Inc. of Chicago, Minneapolis and Winnepeg, to close out their entire stock in 10 days (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1910c).

The residents of the Town of Carlton and surrounding areas came to Carlton one last time. They did not arrive with wagon loads of shingles or bushels of grain, but with pocketbooks open and an eye towards cheap pickings. “Final Wind Up. Cash is King...Entire Stock to go in this Stupendous Sale” announced the newspapers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1910d). It was over quickly.





The clearing sale, held at Miller's store during the past ten days, proved to be quite successful. According to reports, it is said that \$900 worth of goods were disposed of on the opening day while goods valued at \$400 were taken unpaid for. A large number of people not only from Carlton but also from West Kewaunee, took advantage of the sale, keeping the clerks continually on the jump. The remaining goods unsold Mr. Miller will dispose of at an auction (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1910e).

Miller retained ownership of the property, but only for a short while. The cheese factory continued operation under other owners, as did the blacksmith shop (Ogle & Co. 1912). In 1912, Christina Rudebeck, Peter Rudebeck's widow, sued for foreclosure of Miller's mortgage (*Algoma Record* 1912a, 1912b). The *Algoma Record* reported that "the old Carlton pier property, store, and numerous buildings, which from the earliest days of the settlement of Kewaunee County has been the scene of business activities, is now fallen into abandonment and disuse" (*Algoma Record* 1912a). Only the cheese factory remained in operation and would—under a succession of owners—for many years more. The factory was still crating cheese as late as the 1940s, when it was sold to the White House Milk Company in Manitowoc (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1914; 1916a; Urban 2004).

In 1930, when he was in his 70s, William Bach, Ed Bach's oldest son, returned to Carlton and his boyhood haunts. It was a sad visit.

...Carlton, my old home, was but a relic of what it had been. The store was gone, the blacksmith and wagon shops were gone; nearly all the buildings were gone, the mill-pond was dry; the house I called home for so many years was evidenced only by a hole in the ground where the cellar had been; even the fruit and other trees my father had planted, were dying of old age (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1933).

Aerial photos of the property taken in 1938 reveal few signs of Carlton. The remains of the pier are visible just offshore. A bright glint near the end of the rows of pilings may be the roof of the granary, or some fishing shack built out on the pier in its declining years. A disturbed area marks what may be the ruins of the blacksmith shop. A cabin and garage/shed stand north of the ravine and a similar cabin and outbuilding are located to the south. The cheese factory is impossible to pick out though it was still standing. A visitor in 1943 noted that "the whole neighborhood has that intangible atmosphere of age, despite modern farm homes and buildings located nearby" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943).

And yet, the pier road shines clear and bright in the 1938 aerial photo, a pale line winding from Lakeshore Road down to the beach. In her middle years, Luella Bach Hurlbut, daughter of Frederick Bach, purchased a portion of her old family property. The cabin and outbuilding south of the ravine are almost certainly her summer home, overlooking the exposed pilings of the pier where white-sailed schooners carried the forests away. She restored the grounds and cleared the road. She built a stairway down to the beach and spent time amidst the memories of her family—parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, and the man who became her stepfather. A daughter of Carlton came home (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1943).

## ***Dean's Pier and Carlton Today***

Today, the portions of the Dean's Pier/Carlton complex east of Lakeshore are covered by a scatter of agricultural fields, lakeside homes, and manicured lawns. The Taylor and Bach farm is subdivided amongst various owners. Whitaker's house is gone, as are most of the original farm houses along Lake and Lakeshore Road. New forest has regrown around the ravine where the mill pond once sparkled in the sunlight, massive lilacs front Lakeshore Road south of the ravine, and the pier road is shaded and mantled in a verdant cover of grass.

### ***2022 Investigations: Maritime Survey***

Dean's Pier is the most intact of the four piers investigated during the 2022 Lake Michigan Lost Coastal Community survey. At least 144 pilings still stand on the lake bottom, in seven to fifteen feet of water. They begin 347 feet from shore and stretch out for over 370 feet to a point around 720 feet from the current shoreline (Figures 57 and 58). Archival photos of the property taken in the 1970s show many more pilings (Figure 59), and it is likely that some pilings closer to the beach have been buried by sand and rocks from the eroding lake bluffs. At least one worn piling stump is buried on the beach immediately adjacent to the pier road and is visible each spring when the small creek flushes away overlying sand and debris.

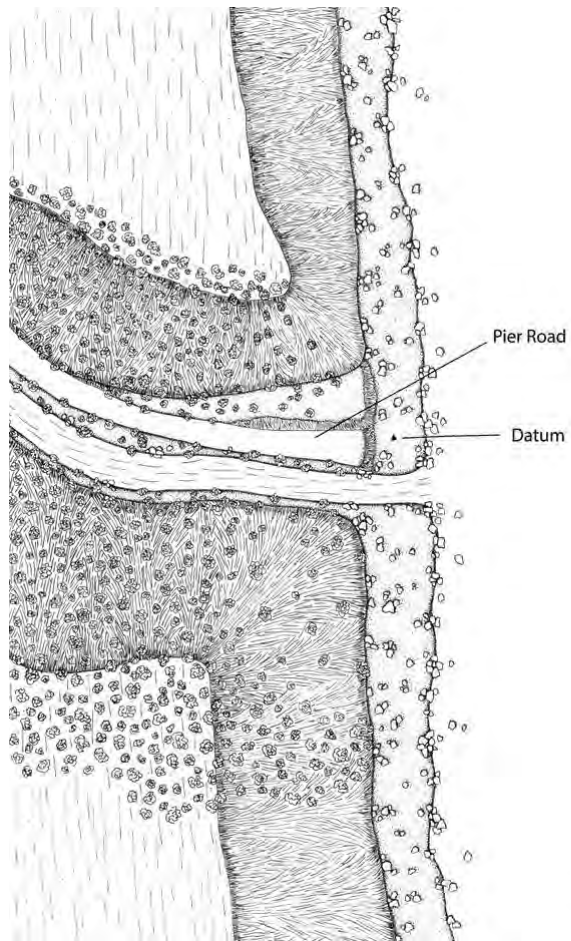
The pier is oriented at a heading of 97 degrees. The pilings vary in size but fall into three main categories measuring 0.5 feet, 0.75 feet, and 1.0 feet in diameter. Their spacing is irregular, likely due to the fact that the pier was rebuilt multiple times throughout its career. The general pattern of the pilings' layout is preserved, however, and is confirmed by a 1938 aerial photo of the pier, taken when it was in better condition (Figure 60). Similar to the other commercial piers recorded along the Kewaunee County shoreline, the pier decking was supported by bents with three sets of supports. Two sets of pilings comprised either side of the bent and the third set served as a central support. The outer rows of pilings largely consist of grouped pilings set close together, while the inner row of pilings appears to consist of paired pilings. Some of the piles in the outer groupings may be 'guard' or 'fender' piles, designed to protect the pier from ships lying alongside it.

Many other clusters of pilings and single piles stand between the three main rows. These are either remnants from earlier versions of Dean's pier or were added where needed to give the pier additional support. One single, smaller diameter piling is located outbound of the end of the pier. The 1938 photo shows what may be a small outbuilding located at the very end of the pier, and historic records confirm that such a building was present. Similar buildings are apparent on historic photos of other piers. This additional piling is interpreted as an outer support for just such a structure.

The pilings at Dean's pier retain remarkable integrity, and the pier is visible on modern satellite imagery. Although a few pilings have fallen or have been broken, the majority of the surviving pilings remain upright and in place (Figures 61 and 62). Some of the pilings come to within inches of the water's surface, and a few break the surface in years of low water or during storms. This is evident on at least three of the tallest pilings, where rings were worn into the wood at various intervals near their upper extent. These wear patterns coordinate with varying water levels over the

# Dean's Pier KE-115

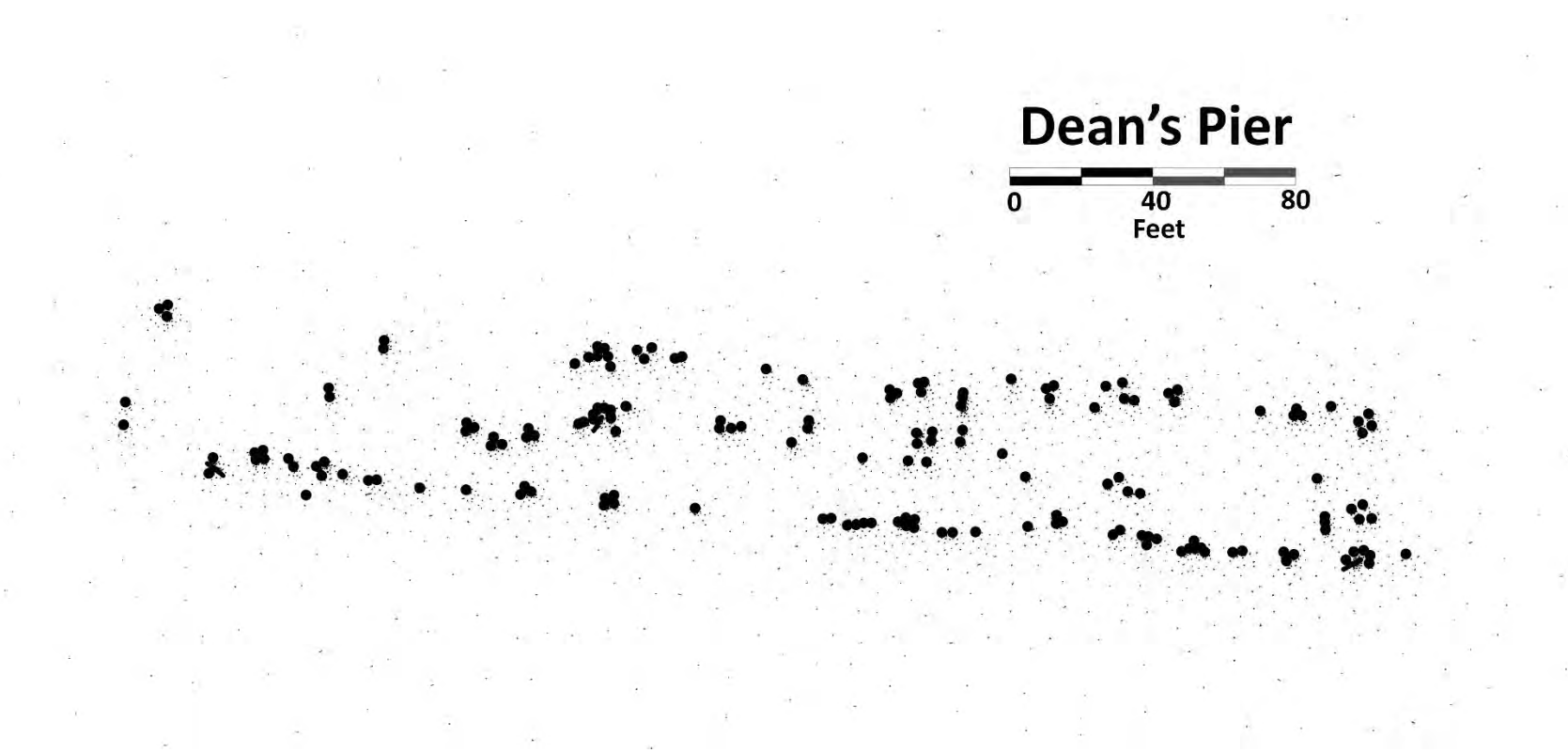
Kewaunee County, Wisconsin



0 feet 20



Figure 57: Map of remains of Dean's Pier in relationship to mouth of creek and lake bluffs.



*Figure 58: Map of remaining pilings at Dean's Pier. Note clustering of pilings and irregular spacing, indicative of multiple rebuilding episodes.*



*Figure 59: Detail of aerial photograph of the Wolske farm ca. 1970s, showing pilings exposed by lower lake levels, looking northeast. Image courtesy of the Wolske family.*



*Figure 60: 1938 aerial photograph of Dean's Pier complex. Note remains of pier visible offshore, pier road leading from Lakeshore Road to the beach, and homestead just south of the beach. Disturbance north of intersection of Lakeshore Road and Lake Road may be the ruins of the later blacksmith shop. Location of cheese shop is denoted by an arrow.*



*Figure 61: Pilings belonging to Dean's pier. Photo taken 2022.*





*Figure 62: Structural timbers at the base of a standing piling (upper left). Photo taken looking down from just below the water's surface.*

years, and represent the level of the water's surface at various points since the pier's construction. The 1970s photo of the pier provided by the Wolske family shows the pier at a time of low water.

No associated artifacts were located during the maritime portion of the site survey, despite excellent visibility and clear water conditions. It is certain, however, that they exist and are buried beneath the sand below the pier. Multiple axe heads were found around the pier by Fred Dishmaker in 1886 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1886s).

LMLCC team members also searched for the remains of the *Mt. Vernon*, which went down a short distance north of the pier in 1869 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869d). Despite good visibility and multiple passes over the wreck site and surrounding area, no visible indications of the wreck were found. The wreck broke up shortly after her sinking, and it is likely that fragments of the vessel lie buried and hidden under the thick layer of sand that covers the nearshore area.



*Figure 63: exposed and worn stump of bridge portion of Dean's Pier on the beach, spring of 2023.*

### *2022 and 2023 Investigations: Terrestrial Survey*

The pier's access road was easily located by LMLCC crews during their shoreline survey in 2022. The road is visible in 1938 aerial photographs and extends down the north side of the ravine at the site to the north side of the stream's outlet. It ends in an eroding cutbank approximately five feet high. The road lines up directly with the pier. The single piling stump visible on the beach in 2023 (Figure 63) confirms that the 'bridge' portion of the pier connected with the pier road. At the time of the 2022 survey, no artifacts were located on land; survey was limited to the beach itself, as permission had not yet been granted to enter the ravine or examine blufftop areas.

### *Landowner Interviews*

In 2023, access to the parcel containing the pier road was given to LMLCC crews by the Wolske family. Mr. and Mrs. Wolske graciously invited the 2023 team into their home and set up a speakerphone conversation with an older relative who grew up on the property. During conversations, family members described finding 19<sup>th</sup> century artifacts in the former garden on the

property, located south and slightly east of the extant residence on the edge of the lake bluff. Some of the mentioned items include a wedding ring and a porcelain doll's head.

Family lore identifies the Wolske house as the summer home of a wealthy woman from Chicago who had ties to the “concrete” business. The small outbuilding/cabin between the current home and the modern garage is said to have been quarters for her servant. Aerial photos taken of the parcel in the 1970s pinpoint the location of the garden mentioned above and confirm that the structures visible on the property in the 1938 aerial photo are the same ones present on the property today.

In a 1943 newspaper article, Luella Bach Hurlbut, Frederick Bach's daughter, is identified as a property owner along the lakeshore on the former Taylor & Bach holdings, though precisely where is not stated. That account states that Ms. Hurlbut purchased land east of Lakeshore Road and built a summer home “some years” prior to the date of the article, suggesting that she had title to her property when the 1938 aerial photo was taken and when the Wolske residence and associated outbuilding are known to have been standing. There are no other equivalent buildings along this stretch of the lakeshore. One ‘L. A. Bach’ owned other lakeshore properties north of Carlton in 1894–1895, but the middle initial does not match (Luella's middle name was Edith), the parcels are too far north, and they were owned too early to be purchases made “some years” before 1943.

Luella's husband, Frederick Hurlbut, Jr., was owner of the Hurlbut Calcium and Chemical Co. of Green Bay, which manufactured barn lime. Though the details are not exact—bagged lime rather than cement or concrete, and Green Bay rather than Chicago—the similarity to Wolske family lore is suggestive. Furthermore, Luella kept the pier road “in repair,” suggesting strongly that it was located on her property just as it lies on the Wolske property today. If the Wolske home is the same residence built by Luella, and the newspaper article's statement that Luella restored the “original appearance of the grounds of her old home” may be taken literally, then the Wolske residence may well lie in the residential heart of Carlton on the very location where the Bach family raised their own children.

One hint that this identification is correct is the presence of massive, elderly lilac bushes along the roadside (Figure 64), screening the Wolske residence from Lakeshore Road. Accounts of the Bach family home mention Edward Bach's love of flowers and landscape ornamentation and the account of Luella Bach Hurlbut's residency notes that she restored the grounds of her former home. Other circumstantial evidence comes from the distance between the Wolske property and the likely location of the store, which matches the 400-foot distance given between the Bach home and the store in the 1873 description of the telegraph line between the two buildings (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873b).

Following the interview with the Wolske family, LMLCC team members were invited along for a walk down the pier road to the beach to investigate a pier piling stump near the pier road and a ‘foundation’ in a level area on the north side of the ravine where the older family member had once played.





*Figure 64: Photograph of Lakeshore Road looking south, taken spring 2023. Note massive lilacs on the east (left) side of the road.*

#### *Ravine and Shoreline Investigations*

Mrs. Wolske directed LMLCC team members to the exposed pier piling on the beach (see Figure 65). The pile barely protrudes from the stone cobbles and is in line with the pier road, approximately ten feet from the elevated road edge. The exposed end is rounded and worn, but the pile seems to be of relatively small diameter, falling within the 0.5 foot diameter category. Mrs. Wolske told team members that this piling only appears in the spring when meltwater flushes sand and debris off the beach.

Next, Mrs. Wolske drew our team's attention to the rim and partial handle of a metal pail nearby, then pointed to a large and prominent midden hidden a short distance inside the mouth of the ravine, on its northern slopes. The midden contains a colorful range of items, including bedsprings, wash pans and tubs, blue enamelware coffee pots, tractor parts, barrel hoops, metal strapping, patent medicine bottles, brown bottles, flower vases, molded crockery, and portions of an older car or tractor battery. The items in the dump post-date the Dean's Pier/Carlton complex, and date mainly to the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when the cheese factory was still in operation. Perhaps the most intriguing item observed was a large metal frame containing parallel wires of galvanized steel that resembles a cheese harp or cheese cutter.



*Figure 65: Midden containing numerous containers, cookware, and other items from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, on the north side of the ravine near the ravine's mouth.*

#### *Structural Feature*

The 'foundation' was located and proved to be a 20 by 25 foot leveled area, with a large and deep depression on its west side (Figure 66). The impressions of parallel floor joists are apparent within the leveled ground, suggesting the former presence of a wood framed building (Figure 67). A large pit with a slight berm on the southern and western sides is the most prominent aspect of the feature (Figure 68). The pit is roughly square, measuring approximately five feet by five feet at the bottom. Parallel timbers are present in the bottom of the pit, and there are remnants of planks shoring up the sides. The upper end of the pit has eroded somewhat and measures approximately 13 to 15 feet across. The entire area cut out of the ravine slope measures 65 by 25 feet. The feature is immediately south of the pier road and is elevated approximately 10 feet above the creek below. LiDAR imagery shows a parallel depression of rounded form directly opposite the feature on the south side of the ravine.

A large metal tie rod with an attached nut protrudes from one corner of the pit (Figure 69). An identical tie rod is located on the opposite corner, but has been displaced and is lying on the ground surface. A fragment of pane glass was observed on the ground surface south of the pit. Fragments



of cut stone protrude from some areas of the berm, and metal strapping and cream brick fragments are present on the ground surface north of the pit.

At the current time, this feature is interpreted by our team as the possible location of a mill. A steam sawmill and gristmill were present in the complex prior to 1858, and a replacement steam sawmill was built after the wildfire of 1864 (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859c, 1859f). An eight-foot-deep millpond was present at Dean's Pier/Carlton as well, and the location of the leveled feature right at the uppermost edge of the millpond's depth, combined with traces of a wood frame structure with windows, suggests that the feature may represent the surviving remains of one of the mills associated with the complex. If this identification is correct, there is cause for celebration. No traces of Kewaunee County's other rural coastal mills survive.

The archival research and investigations conducted for this study have allowed a tentative reconstruction of Dean's Pier/Carlton (Figure 70). Even so, many questions remain, including the location of worker's housing, Kieweg's house, the cluster of barns, the ice house, the wagon shop, and so on. The remains of the *Mt. Vernon* have yet to be relocated. Dean's Pier/Carlton was a stand-out among the pier communities through its lifespan as an active shipping port. It is only fitting that it stands out in its archaeological form as well.

This site is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

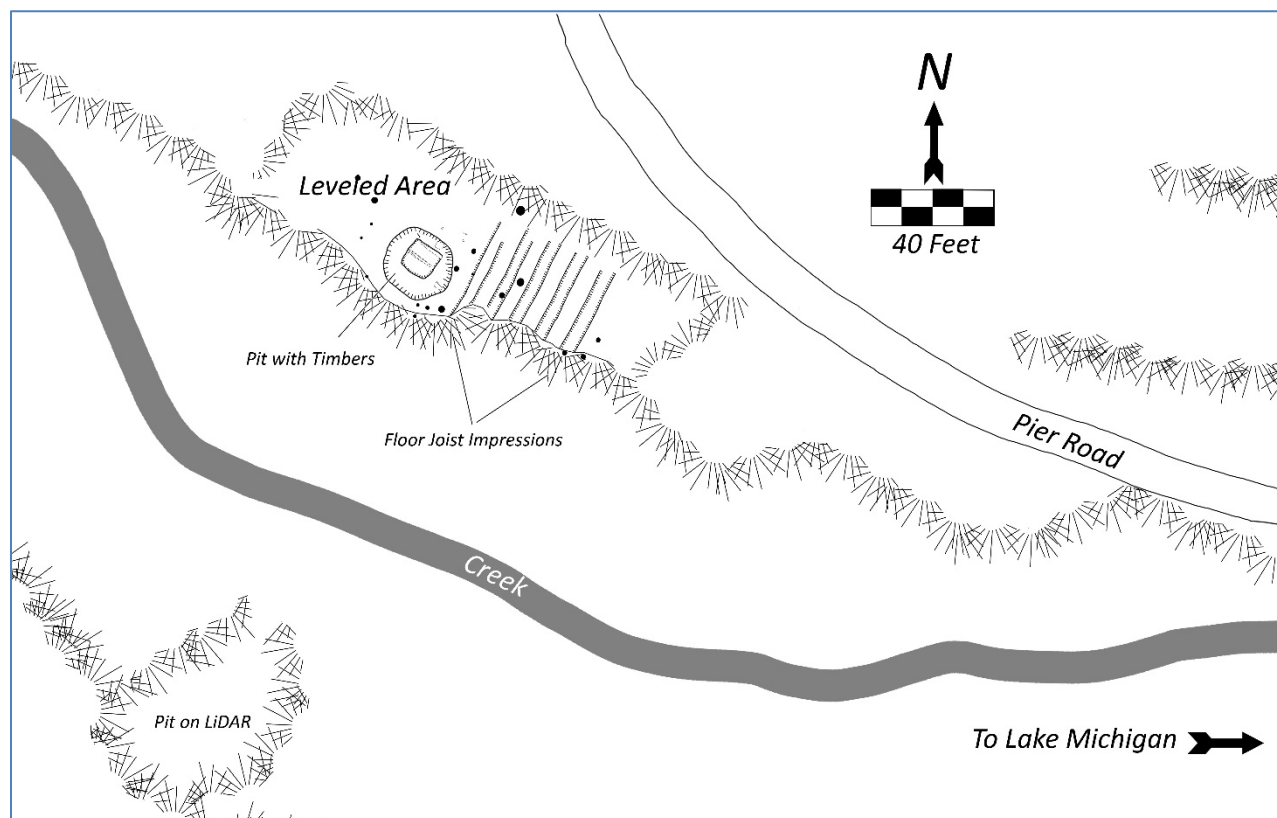


Figure 66: Plan view of structural feature at Dean's Pier/Carlton.





*Figure 67: Ridges and swales at structural feature representing impressions of floor joists.*



*Figure 68: Pit within structural feature. Note timber and plank framing within pit.*





Figure 69: Tie rod extending outward from corner of pit within structural feature. An identical rod lies on the ground surface on the opposite corner of the pit.

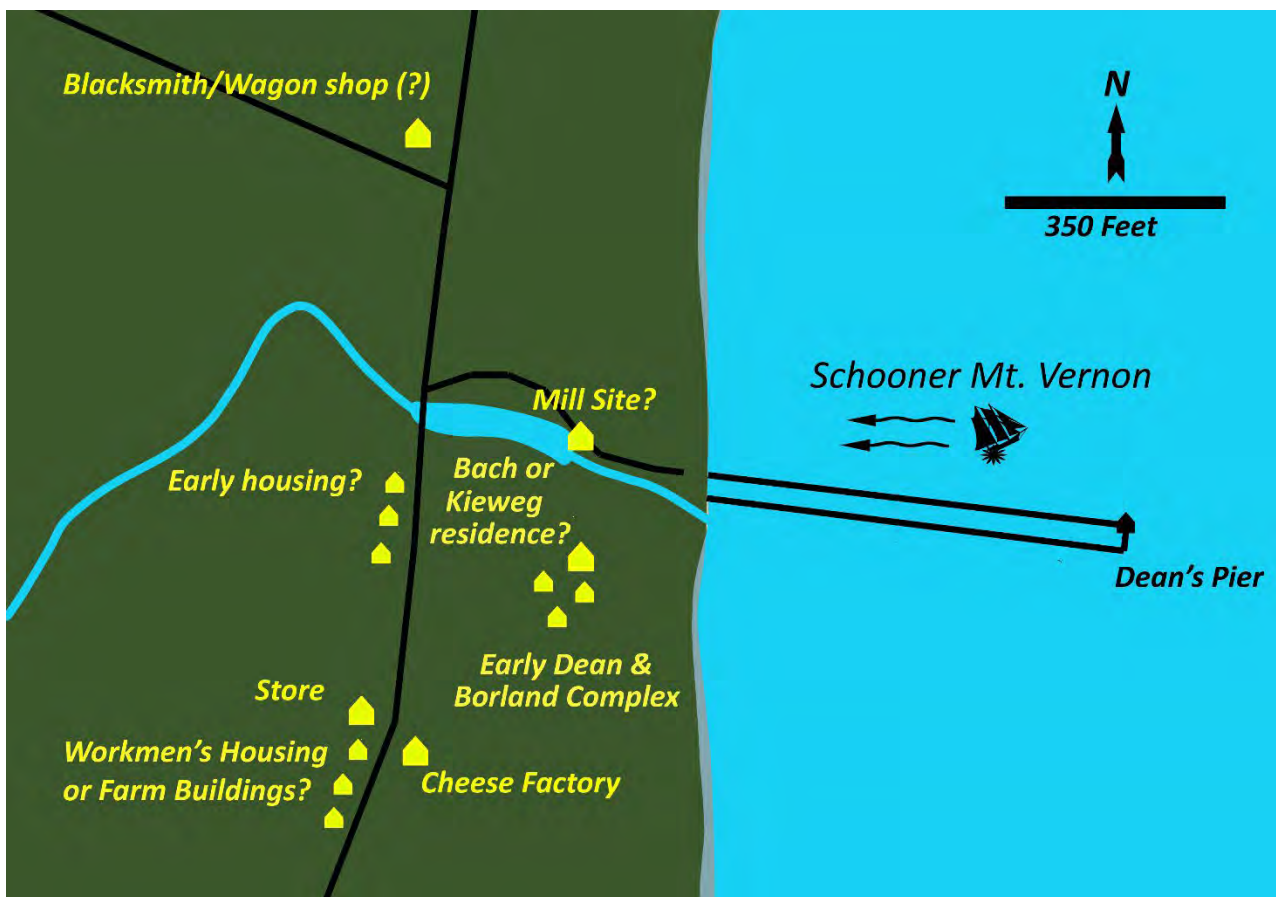


Figure 70: Reconstructed layout of the Dean's Pier/Carlton complex.

## Chapter Seven

### Between Rocks and a Hard Place: Grimm's Pier

Not every pier community met with success. The remains of Grimm's Pier, situated on the southern coast of the Town of Pierce, four and a half miles north of Kewaunee, stand as a testament to all that could go wrong.

At first glance, the pier site looks like many others on the Kewaunee coast (Figure 71). A small, shallow creek emerges into the sunlight from a deeply-cut and tree-shaded ravine. Steep lake bluffs tower over the beach below. The narrow shoreline is a rippled blanket of wave-polished cobbles of Niagara dolostone and till. The weathered trunks of fallen trees, left behind by the eroding and retreating lake bluffs, hamper travel along the beach and warn of the danger that Lake Michigan's rising waters pose to her ghost ports.

Standing on the beach and looking southward, one can see the Kewaunee light station in the distance. Henry Grimm never saw this light; the first light on the Kewaunee piers wasn't installed until 1889 and the light station itself dates to 1912, a decade after his death (Kewaunee Pierhead Lighthouse 2023). He still felt Kewaunee's presence, however. At the height of the lumber boom, Henry Grimm would have stood at the end of his pier watching white sails, steam, and smoke moving to and from Kewaunee's piers. To him, the sight represented both a market and a threat of competition he could not hope to overcome. To Lake Michigan's mariners, it was a reminder that a better and safer port lay close at hand. Turning his back on Kewaunee, Grimm would have seen an equally worrisome sight—Alaska Pier, anchor of a thriving, better-supplied, and far better-funded commercial settlement just under two miles to his north.

Alaska Pier and Kewaunee had advantages his pier lacked. Massive boulders rise from the water near Grimm's Pier, and shadows and ripples hint at hidden dangers. A complex of shallow shoals flanks the Kewaunee side of the pier and boulders are scattered to the north, as several ship's pilots learned the hard way.

In the beginning, however, the location must have appeared to be a good one. Native peoples had chosen the small creek and the adjoining lakeshore as a suitable place to live many thousands of years before Grimm's arrival. Stone tools left behind prior to Contact, including projectile points dropped by hunters over 10,000 years ago, have been found in the vicinity (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1949; Mason 1963:202). The ancient trail from Kewaunee to Door County ran parallel to the lakeshore about three-quarters of a mile inland—close enough to afford a route of overland travel if needed, but far enough to provide some privacy from strangers passing by. Surveyors with the General Land Office described the land as rolling and second-rate for farming, but well-timbered with oak, cedar, beech, sugar maple, basswood, and hemlock (Hathaway 1835b).

Henry Grimm came to the United States from Prussia ca. 1848, when he was a young man in his early 20s. Ten years later he married his wife Caroline, the same year that John Swain, a resident of Milwaukee County, became the first European settler to claim the property that would become Grimm's Pier. Around 1865–1867, as he approached the age of 40, Grimm purchased the property.





*Figure 71: Location of Grimm's Pier, from the lakeshore road. The store location was somewhere within this field of view.*

Grimm's new holdings extended along the lakeshore for 1.25 miles, bordered on the east by Lake Michigan and on the west by a lakeshore wagon road that had replaced the inland trail. The 1870 agricultural schedule for the Federal Census describes a small farm. Only 14 acres were under cultivation, and another 20 were untouched or cutover. By then Grimm owned a horse, a milk cow, a pig, a team of mules, and a team of oxen (United States Census 1870).

The 1866/1877 Lake Michigan coastal chart records more about the state of Grimm's new holdings at the time of his arrival (Figure 72). Farmers and loggers were opening the first large clearings in northern Kewaunee County's virgin coastal forest. Small fields and farmsteads hugged the coastline, extending north from Kewaunee and south from Ahnapee with a stretch of unbroken timbered coastline in between. The first segments of what would become Lakeshore Road extended out from the early port towns to these lakeside farms. Grimm's property sat at the northern limit of the Kewaunee farms, in the forested stretch. The coastal chart shows a small cluster of three buildings—possibly fishing shanties—on the coast in the northern portion of his holdings, at the mouth of another little stream one half mile north of where Grimm's Pier would one day stand (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1867).



Figure 72: The future location of Grimm's Pier (circled), on the 1866/1877 coastal chart (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1877).

Sketchy accounts suggest that Grimm might have established a small roadside store on the property as early as 1865. There, “kerosene, groceries, and tobacco” could be purchased (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1923b). However, the 1866 coastal chart indicates that Lakeshore Drive did not yet reach that far from Kewaunee, though a foot and horse trail between Kewaunee and Ahnapee likely existed. Contemporary accounts confirm that construction of the pier was underway by Christmas of 1867, funded by “Messrs. Grimm & Dorner” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867I). As it is unlikely that the store could operate without an easy means of resupply, either a smaller and earlier pier was not noted during the 1866 survey or the 1865 date for the store is incorrect. The identity of ‘Dorner,’ presumed to be Grimm’s initial stakeholder or business partner, is a mystery as well. He is not mentioned in connection with Grimm after this point. Likewise, there is some mystery surrounding the identity of one Jacob Grimm, mentioned as an owner or manager of the pier in several newspaper accounts dating to 1869.

Grimm and Dorner had competition. Two piers were being built north of Kewaunee—their own, and one funded by the prominent Kewaunee-based mercantile and lumber-trading consortium of W. D. Hitchcock & Co. The Hitchcock & Co. pier would later be christened Alaska Pier, distinguishing it from Hitchcock’s pier in Kewaunee itself. The *Kewaunee Enterprise* saw no problem with the situation. They opined that the piers would be of great benefit to the local area. As proof, they pointed to the fact that “large quantities” of forest products were already being brought to them even though neither was ready for shipping (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867I).

Perhaps Grimm didn't fret much over the situation. After all, there was plenty of forest to go round.

Grimm's problems, however, were only getting started. The completed pier extended only 660 feet into the lake, providing little room to maneuver past the shoals to her south. The lake portion of the Lake Michigan Coastal Chart, completed in 1877, gives a generous potential depth of seven to eight feet at the pier's terminus, but also shows shoals rising only three and a half to six feet approximately 2000 feet from shore. Current NOAA charts, though of coarser scale, also depict a scatter of hazard rocks (Figure 73)—some entirely submerged—extending south from near the pier location (NOAA Chart 14903).

An account written in early 1870 mentions that an unnamed vessel was lost at the pier in 1868, the pier's first full year of operation (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870c). In April of 1869, an unnamed fore-and-after schooner picking up posts ran into one of the nearby boulders while leaving the pier. She stuck fast and her crew had to throw 400 of the posts from her deck load into the lake before she was light enough to float free (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869f). In September, the schooner *Rival* arrived to pick up 50 cords of wood. She was piloted by 'Capt. Gary of Milwaukee,' who—so the papers said—had just mortgaged his home and properties to buy her. Upon leaving, Captain Gary turned the *Rival* turned northeastward and away from the shoals south of the pier. The wind stilled, the lake had a heavy swell, and the vessel drifted. Three-thousand feet northeast of the end of the pier, a wave trough dropped her onto a boulder. She filled and settled onto the shallow bottom almost immediately.

Captain Gary set out for shore—probably returning to Grimm's Pier in the ship's boat—and traveled to Manitowoc where he engaged the tug *G. W. Tift* to try to free her. Columnists for the *Kewaunee Enterprise* reported that the tug sailed north, then returned south again the same day without the *Rival*. She had arrived to find the *Rival* off the reef and in shallower water, but with the bottom of her hull ripped away. The uninsured *Rival* was stripped and abandoned. Within a few more days, her broken wreck was scattered on the beach near the pier (*Ahnapee Record* 1869; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869r, 1869s). It is unlikely that Grimm looked kindly at the sight, advertising as it did the physical and economic hazards of doing business with him.

A decision was made to extend the pier 400 feet further into the lake. By the end of November, a workforce was busy cutting timber and piles for the addition (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869v). This extension brought the pier to a new length of 1,060 feet, well past the nearshore shoals, and into at least 20 feet of water. The goal, as the *Enterprise* noted, was to give vessels "secure moorings and plenty of sea room to enable them to work away from it in case of a blow" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870c). Work on the pier continued through the spring of that year (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870g).

For the short term, things went well—or at least ran smoothly enough that Grimm's Pier stayed out of the local newspaper columns. By the first weeks of September in 1871 Grimm was doing a good business. His properties included his store and farm. He grew and stockpiled hay and oats. He owned the usual set of farming tools, along with nine sleighs likely used to transport lumber. His workforce was sufficient to operate the pier, manage the store, work the farm, and cut and transport enough timber to extend the pier to its new length. His store yards were still well-stocked, even late in the season before the winter's timber harvest could commence.





*Figure 73: Detail of image of the shore at Grimm's Pier, showing large rock just offshore (arrow). Numerous additional boulders are submerged just below the water's surface.*

It was stiflingly hot. In mid-August, a sharp-witted columnist for the *Kewaunee Enterprise* (1871n) joked that the temperature had risen “to two shirt collars a day.” The rains failed. The little creek that emptied at the pier likely stopped running. Perhaps Grimm worried over his harvest, or wondered if enough snow would fall to allow his sleigh drivers to run timber to the pier. The smell of smoke filled the air as fires set by careless settlers and farmers clearing their land started to spread. On Thursday, September 21, 1871, those fires still were under control (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q). However, northeastern Wisconsin—and indeed much of the western Great Lakes—was parched dry and ripe for calamity.

That night, a southeast wind arose and strengthened steadily. The scattered fires “...burst all bounds and spread with unexampled rapidity” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q). The Great Fire bore towards the coast. People ran for the lake, seeking safety in its waters and evacuation from its piers. Others fought to save their homes.

Staff with the *Kewaunee Enterprise* headed northward into the burnt region late on Sunday. What they saw astounded them.

We...have not the ability to adequately describe the distressing scenes that we witnessed. Homeless families were gathered on the piers at Grimm's and at Alaska, with such as their household goods as they had been able to save. Some had lost everything—houses, barns, fences, crops, provisions, furniture—excepting only the clothing they wore. In other instances the furniture had been removed from the house to the road or clearing, and the younger children left with it, while the older members of the family, almost exhausted with forty-eight hours of continuous labor and nearly blinded with smoke and heat, were still nobly battling to save their homes from destruction. In the eastern part of the town of Pierce there are no fences left worth speaking of. The fact that so many buildings were saved seems almost unaccountable (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q).

As the issue went to press on Wednesday, September 27, 1871, the fires were still burning. Preliminary losses to Henry Grimm included his barn, twenty tons of hay, 500 bushels of oats, his farming equipment, and his nine sleighs, along with wood products stockpiled at the pier: 8,000 hops poles, 7,000 railroad ties, 500 cedar posts, 460 cords of maple, 150 cords of beech, and 18 cords of tanning bark. The reporters for the *Enterprise* noted that "...the store and pier of Mr. Grimm were saved by hard work, and hard work alone" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q). Grimm was not insured, and his losses—in modern currency—were estimated at nearly \$146,000, or nearly three times the value of his farmland as listed in the 1870 census (United States Census 1870).

In the aftermath, Grimm's Pier was a rallying point—a place where survivors regrouped, sought shelter along the roads, or took lake transport away from the smoldering wreckage of their lives (Johnson 2021). Grimm's workers and family undoubtedly took time to rest and recuperate when they were able, eyes and lungs burning from long exposure to the smoke and heat. On October 8<sup>th</sup>, northern Kewaunee County's tragedy was overshadowed by the Great Peshtigo Firestorm and the Great Chicago Fire, for which the September fires had served an early warning.

Within a month, the pier was shipping again. The store contained goods that burnt out families needed, and the burnt over region contained charred timber ripe to be salvaged and sold. Winter was coming, and new stocks and supplies needed to be laid in. Grimm's run of bad luck, however, continued. In October, the scow schooner *Swallow* came to pick up railroad ties. After a thousand of Grimm's ties were placed in her hold, the lake roughened and her Captain made the decision to pull back from the pier and anchor further offshore. When conditions calmed, she started to return towards the pier but struck a rock "some distance" to its north, filled, and sank much as the *Rival* had (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871t). Accounts written forty years later implicated smoke from the Peshtigo Fire in the accident, claiming that she ran aground due to poor visibility (*Algoma Record* 1911b).

It is presumed that in between these events and afterwards, commerce flowed more smoothly. The June 25, 1872 issue of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* (1872g) indicated that fifteen cargoes shipped from Grimm's Pier early in the season, suggesting that a normal year during the lumber boom saw vessels load and depart without incident at least two dozen times, if not more. Against this backdrop, Grimm's troubles may have been worse than most, but were still only hitches in an otherwise successful enterprise. Another challenge presented itself in late spring of 1873, when a storm raised an ice shove along the Town of Pierce's coastline, doing heavy damage to both Grimm's Pier and Alaska Pier. The outer 60 feet of Grimm's pier were completely broken away and destroyed, 90 cords of bark and wood stored on the pier were lost, and the pier was "...otherwise badly damaged" to the amount of another \$37,000 in 2023 dollars (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873f).

In July of 1874, real estate transfers listed in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* record that Henry Grimm sold the property surrounding his pier to neighbor Herman Berg for \$1,000 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874h). Grimm purchased the land back shortly afterwards, as the 1876 plat map (compiled in 1875) shows Grimm as the owner and Berg owning the lakeshore properties to the north of the lots



Figure 74: 1876 plat map showing location of Grimm's Pier (J. Knauber & Co. 1876).

that changed hands (J. Knauber & Co. 1876). This action and sum, though insufficient to cover his losses due to the ice shove alone, suggests Grimm might have been in temporary need of quick cash. Converted to modern currency, he temporarily gained \$26,000 in funds from the transaction.

For some time after that, Grimm stayed out of the newspapers. The pier was presumably repaired, and vessel pilots were luckier or more careful. During the peak of the lumber boom, Grimm's fortunes were good. The plat map drafted in 1875 (published 1876) places Grimm's store on the south side of the creek, along the Lakeshore Road (Figure 74). Though no service road is depicted, one ran down the lake bluff to the pier. No other structures are depicted on the plat, though Grimm's residence, barns, stables, etc. and any lodging for laborers, would also have been located on the property.

The year 1876 dawned with Grimm's store well-stocked and his business "lively." Teams loaded with as much wood "...as our muscular townsmen are able to manufacture..." streamed towards the pier for shipping (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876a, 1876b). That spring, the scow schooner *Hercules* picked up a load of tanning bark for Grimm and promptly became the latest and last vessel known to have run afoul of the shoals surrounding the pier. Accounts vary as to whether she settled alongside the pier, or simply near it as the others had. In any case, the damage was not severe. The tug *Kitty Smoke* arrived to assist, her cargo was removed, and the tug pumped the

water out of her hold before towing her back to Manitowoc for repairs (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876c, *Manitowoc Tribune* 1876a, 1876b).

The pier's next appearance in the local papers came not as the result of a shipwreck, ice push, or fire, but as the result of another hazard of pier life—horses. In late June of 1877, town resident Matthias Kremmel came to the pier with a wagon load of tanning bark, driving a team of newly purchased colts. At the bottom of the bluffs he dismounted and walked behind the wagon to remove the braking chain set to prevent the rear wheels from turning. As he did so, the load shifted and bark fell onto the horses. They bolted.

The short account of the incident carried in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* captures the basics. The team ran the length of the pier, smashing the wagon on stockpiled timbers, before leaping to their deaths in the lake. The actual incident was likely one of abrupt and noisy chaos: Kremmel, left behind on shore, shouting as a valuable team and wagon ran away; any workers on the pier diving for safety as the din of hooves on planks, jingling chains, rumbling wheels, and smashing wood approached; tanning bark flying everywhere as the wagon's load spilled. Such was life on the piers, and Grimm's pier was not the only one to suffer such runaways (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877o).

Two years later, Grimm was in the newspaper again, but for other reasons. The *Kewaunee Enterprise* reported that he had harvested 1,144 bushels of wheat from an initial sowing of only 58 bushels (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879p). The yields were noteworthy and heralded a change in his occupation. In the 1880 census, his occupation was listed as “farmer”—not merchant, not store manager, not a shipper of lumber, or operator of a pier. The lumber boom was over. The pier still stood, but only appeared in contemporary newspapers after this point as a landmark used to orient readers to the location of a drowning or drifting vessel.

Grimm sold his farm to a Mr. Schmidt from Cedarburg for \$6,000 (\$174,500 in modern currency) in 1881 (*Ahnapee Record* 1881g). By then he was in his mid-50s, and father to several children. His youngest, Henry Grimm, Jr., was only three years old. Local newspapers recorded that he relocated to Kewaunee in early 1882 and intended to “go west to find a suitable business location” (*Ahnapee Record* 1882g). Instead, Grimm purchased the River Side House, a Kewaunee Hotel, for the sum of \$3,000 (\$87,300 in modern currency) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882g). His new enterprise was a success. By August of 1885, he was able to finance construction of a fine brick home for his family (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885g). In 1892, he purchased the Ahnapee House in Algoma, relocating north to that city (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1892).

By then, the store was gone. Neither it nor the pier, still at least partially standing, are depicted on the 1895 plat map of the Town of Pierce. The property had changed hands again and was under the ownership of William Jahnke. A new structure (likely the Jahnke farmstead) is shown along Lakeshore Road well north of the creek and northeast of the intersection of Lakeshore and 4<sup>th</sup> Road.

As Henry Grimm, Sr. prospered in the hospitality industry, his youngest son rose in the world. The *Algoma Press* (1899b) of May 17, 1899, carried a report that a schooner had arrived with all sails

set during heavy weather. Its cargo consisted of 26,000 feet of lumber for “Henry Grimm’s lumber yard in this city”. Henry Grimm, Jr., now a young man in his early 20s, entered the lumber trade.

The elder Grimm died of “paralysis” in Algoma in 1900 at the age of 74. His obituary mentioned that he had once “conducted a general store” and was “manager and proprietor” of Grimm’s Pier. He was described as a man “...of extensive acquaintanceship throughout the entire county...identified with varied interests which brought him into contact with people, and by these he was highly spoken of” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1900c).

Grimm’s Pier, never a large settlement to begin with, had become a ghost port. The pier is not mentioned in the 1902 Coast Pilot’s guide (Scott 1902). In 1911, its ruins were still visible from the lake shore road but had been so far forgotten that the writers of the *Algoma Record* (1911a) felt it worthwhile to inform their readers that Grimm’s Pier and nearby Alaska Pier had once been “...lively business places forty and more years ago, where great quantities of forest products were annually banked.” By 1938, only a scattered line of posts could be seen (USDA 1938 BHU-1–26).

### ***Grimm’s Pier Today***

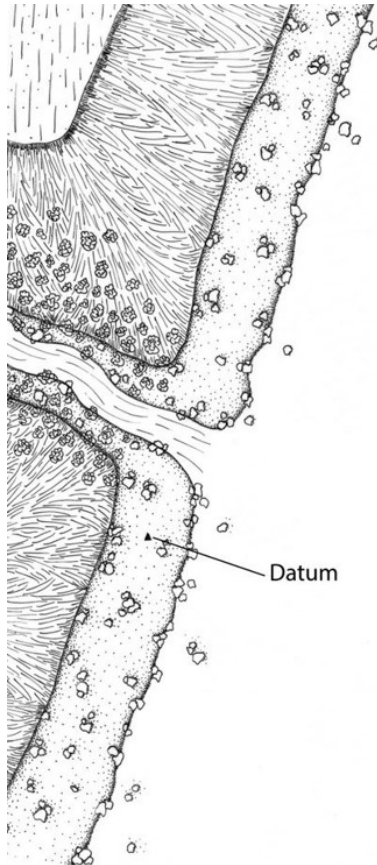
The approach to the Grimm’s Pier site from Lake Michigan gave project members a small taste of the difficulty that schooner pilots experienced near the pier. Now, as then, large rocks and shoals rise near the surface of the water. The presence of the remaining pier pilings, which are now completely submerged, represented additional hazards to the *Dawn Treader*. After careful maneuvering, the line of the pier was marked with temporary floats, and the shore party ferried survey equipment onto the beach. The survey datum was set up just south of the mouth of the small creek. Divers moved the stadia rod from piling to piling, as their locations were surveyed in by the total station transit team on shore.

The remains of Grimm’s Pier lie on a heading of 106-degrees, and extend between 435 to 640 feet from the current beach (Figures 75 and 76). Given this distance from shore, it is likely that the preserved pilings represent the remains of the original 1867 pier rather than the 1869 addition or any rebuilding after the 1873 ice shove. It is very likely that more pilings exist closer to shore, but they are covered by sand and rocks. Additionally, visibility at the site was extremely low at the time of survey due to sand and silt suspended in the water, and additional pilings likely exist that were not recorded.

A total of 41 pilings were found and recorded in 2022. They sit in eight to 12 feet of water, and measure approximately one foot in diameter. The spacing of the pilings is irregular, but a general pattern of the pilings’ layout can be seen. Similar to the other piers recorded in this region, the pier appears to have been supported by three rows of pilings extending out from shore. The outer rows of pilings largely consist of paired pilings or groups of three pilings set close together, while the inner row of pilings appears to consist of single pilings. The spacing of the pilings suggests that the width of the pier planking could not have been less than 44 feet, more than sufficient for draft teams and wagons to pass by one another, or for teams to maneuver on a pier laden with stockpiled timber goods.

# Grimm's Pier KE-116

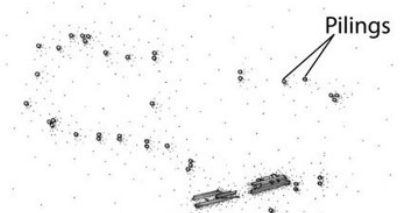
Kewaunee County, Wisconsin



Datum



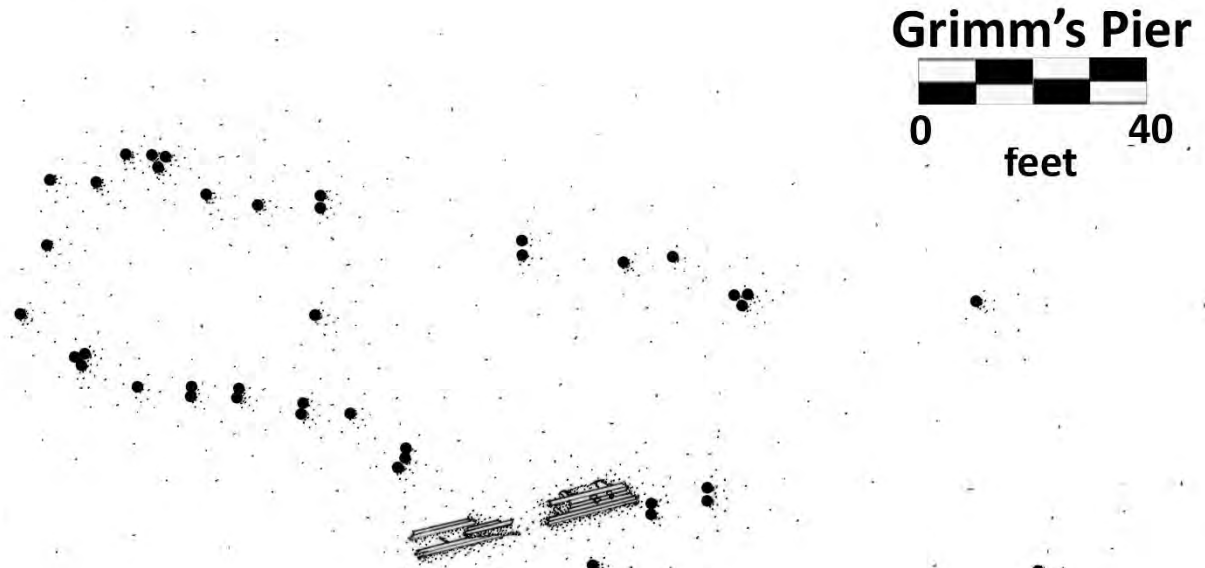
0 feet 20



Pilings

Figure 75: Map of remnants of Grimm's Pier, in relationship to mouth of creek and shoreline.





*Figure 76: Detail of map of Grimm's Pier, showing pilings and submerged timbers identified in 2022.*



*Figure 77: Overgrown pier road at Grimm's Pier from beach next to mouth of creek (right).*

during the survey, extending down the bluff along the north side of the stream's outlet (Figure 77). At the time, no artifacts were located on land; however, additional investigations of the shoreline may reveal additional artifacts and structures in the future.

Extending over 42.2 feet in length, a section of longitudinal wooden planking was located near the southernmost row of outer pilings, beginning approximately 516 feet from shore. This section of planking is made up of timbers measuring 0.7 feet wide and 0.3 feet thick. Additionally, what appear to be four pilings, cut to match the level of the timbers, are located between a few of the timbers. It is not precisely known what this section of timbers represents, but it may be part of the pier's wooden deck or part of a building situated along the pier. Additional investigations in clearer visibility should allow for a more specific identification of this piece.

No associated artifacts were located during the site survey. Landward, the pier's access road was easily located

## Chapter Eight

### Legal Jeopardy: Sprague's Pier and Silver Creek Pier

Of all of the lost piers of Kewaunee County, Sprague's Pier and Silver Creek Pier have retreated into the fog of obscurity the most thoroughly. There are, it is rumored, pier pilings still along the shore where Sprague's Pier stood, but they lie within the exclusion zone for the Kewaunee power station and are off limits to survey. No pier remnants are visible on aerial photographs from the 1930s or later years. Informants report seeing bottles and other 19<sup>th</sup> century artifacts along the banks of the small creek that enters the lake at the location of Sprague's Pier, but the items could easily relate to occupation by later farmers.

#### ***On the Defense: Sprague's Pier***

The location of Sprague's Pier is attested to only by the 1866/1877 coastal chart of Lake Michigan, which shows a relatively small pier on the south side of a prominent point, one mile south of the Sandy Bay pier and two miles north of the pier and tannery complex at Two Creeks (Figure 78). A single building is depicted at the base of the pier, presumably representing the complex's sawmill. As at the other pier sites, a small stream enters the lake where the pier was built. It formerly drained an extensive grove of hemlock.

The tale of Sprague's Pier is a tale of absentee landowners, local managers, and litigation. The scant records suggest short-term operation of a small but well-staffed mill, run by partners plagued with financial difficulties. James M. Sprague's name is the one that appears in connection with the pier and mill most consistently, often as part of a commercial partnership with John J. Owen known as 'Sprague, Owen & Co.' Two other men—Hiram Cogswell and Adolph Manseau—are linked with the pier in its early years as well.

James Madison Sprague was born in Vermont in 1809. He arrived in Wisconsin as one of the throng of Yankees streaming into Wisconsin Territory to seek their fortunes. Sprague's early career was a rocky one. He took a loan to buy property in what would become downtown Racine, Wisconsin in 1841, but was unable to repay it and defaulted in 1846 (*Racine Advocate* 1845). The following year, Sprague moved to Two Rivers, Wisconsin, presumably gearing up to try his fortunes again (*Miner v. Medbury* 1858). Once settled in Two Rivers, Sprague got married and started a family.

Sprague's wife Mary had strong connections to Racine, and it is a certainty he met her there. Her maternal uncle, Gilbert Knapp, was Racine's founder. She had been married before but was widowed with a young daughter at the time that Sprague courted her. Sprague served a brief stint on the Manitowoc County Board of Commissioners before that board dissolved in 1849. By 1850, he was working as a merchant as part of Two Rivers' business class. His household included Mary, infant son Edward, a clerk, and two unrelated women in their early 20s (United States Census 1850). Mary's daughter Julia, by then 11 years old, does not appear on the census list and may have stayed behind with relatives in Racine.



Figure 78: Sprague's Pier (circled), on the 1866/1877 coastal chart (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1877).

Sprague formally claimed the land where the Sprague, Owen & Co. pier was built in October of 1854, after the signing of the Treaty of the Wolf River allowed Kewaunee County to be colonized (Bureau of Land Management 2023). Unlike McNally and Ritter, Sprague did not homestead his pier location. Rather, he alternated between Manitowoc County and Racine over the next decade. Twin sons Lewis and Henry were born to James and Mary in Racine in 1854, the same year that the claim was registered for the pier property. Sprague appears on the 1855 Wisconsin census among the householders in Racine and is listed as a resident lumber dealer in the Racine City Directory of 1858 (Smith, Du Moulin & Co. 1858).

Sprague expanded his holdings in Manitowoc County through the early 1850s. By December of 1856 he owned interests in the North Bridge Pier in the town of Two Rivers and over 1,200 acres of timberland, as well as his pier in Kewaunee County. At some point during this period, he established his partnership with John J. Owen, a fellow New York Yankee. Owen was a lumberman and property owner of some means who moved to Sheboygan prior to 1855. He appears on the Wisconsin census for that year living in a household of six. One of his housemates was likely his wife, Sarah. Their oldest son Frank was born that year, and second son James would be born the year after (United States Census 1860; Wisconsin State Census 1855). Together, Sprague and Owens invested in the construction of a steam sawmill on the south side of Stony Point.

Sprague and Owens were absentee owners. Two local residents with experience in the lumbering industry were brought on board as on-site managers. Hiram Cogswell was a lumberman from Two Rivers. Census records place him in that city by 1850 (United States Census 1850). Though his residence was officially listed as in Two Rivers in the 1855 Wisconsin Census (Wisconsin State Census 1855), historian George Wing claims that he was appointed a local judge of election for the

**Circuit Court—Manitowoc County.**  
 Alfred Smith against James M. Sprague,  
 H. J. Ullman, for the use of R. H. Miller,  
 William Aldrich, Hezekiah H. Smith,  
 Martin B. Medbury, John W. Medbury,  
 James F. Aldrich, the City Bank of Racine,  
 Jacob A. Hoover, Thomas Turton,  
 John Sercomb, Gilbert Kuspp and  
 Charles Keuhn.

IN virtue of, and pursuant to a judgment rendered in said court in the above entitled action, dated the 27th day of April, 1860, I, True M. Bailey, referee appointed in said judgment, shall expose for sale, and sell at public auction at the Court House in the village of Manitowoc, and county of Manitowoc, on Monday the 10th day of September, 1860, at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon of that day, the following described mortgaged premises, or so much thereof as may be necessary to raise the amount of said judgment, interest and costs, together with expense of sale: The following is a description of the mortgaged premises herein before mentioned:—the undivided one fourth of the following described parcels or pieces of land situated in the counties of Kewaunee and Manitowoc, in the State of Wisconsin, viz:—one undivided one fourth part of the south west quarter of section (15), one undivided fourth part of the south east quarter of section twenty-one (21), one undivided fourth part of the west half of the south west quarter, and of the west half of the north east quarter of section twenty-two (22), one undivided fourth part of the south west quarter of section twenty-six (26), one undivided fourth part of the south half, and one undivided fourth part of the north east quarter of section twenty-seven (27), one undivided fourth part of the east half, and one undivided fourth part of the north west quarter of section twenty-eight (28), all in township number twenty-two (22), north, of range number twenty-four (24) east, and one undivided one fourth part of the south half of the north west quarter of section number thirty-six (36), in township number twenty-one (21), north, of range number twenty-three, (23), east; also east half of the south west quarter of section number twenty-five (25), fractional east half of the north west quarter of section thirty-six (36), south east quarter of the south east quarter of section four (4), the south west quarter of the south west quarter of section three (3); the north east half of the north east quarter of section nine (9), the north east quarter of the south west quarter of section nine (9), the north west quarter of the north west quarter of section ten (10), the west half of the south east quarter of section ten (10), and the south east quarter of the south east quarter of section sixteen (16), township number twenty-two (22), north, of range twenty-four (24).

Dated Manitowoc, June 8th, 1860.  
 TRUE M. BAILEY, Referee.  
 Wm. NICHOLS, Plf's Att'y. 5-3m

Figure 79: Summons in Kewaunee Enterprize 1860f.

Sandy Bay region in Kewaunee County in 1854, the year that the pier deed was formally registered (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1923a).

Adolph Mansau, the other lumberman mentioned in connection with the Sprague, Owen & Co. pier, also lived in Two Rivers. Mansau was of French-Canadian birth and immigrated to Manitowoc as a young man *circa* 1844. His tenure in Manitowoc County seems to have been somewhat unsettled, as one might expect of someone employed in lumber camps. He was working as a sawyer in Two Creeks in 1850 (United States Census 1850), and married wife Margaret Ery in Mishicot in 1852 (*Manitowoc Pilot* 1893). At some point—likely around 1854—he relocated to Kewaunee County and went to work at the Sprague & Owens pier. How long he stayed, and what his role was specifically, is unknown. Per draft records, his official place of residence in 1865 was back in Mishicot (United States Civil War Draft Registration Records 1863–1865).

The first half of the 1850s brought growth to Sprague and to Owen, and to their partnership after it formed. The last half of the decade brought dissolution. Sprague and Owen didn't pay their bills and their creditors were angry. In 1856 Sprague was sued personally in Racine Circuit Court (*Wisconsin State Journal* 1856). At the end of the year, he was sued in Manitowoc County and his Manitowoc County properties were seized and put up for auction (*Manitowoc Herald* 1857). Sprague, Owens & Co. were sued in 1857 after failing to repay a \$515.87 loan.

In the midst of the litigation, Sprague returned to Manitowoc County, settling at Mishicot. The family appears on the 1860 census as residents of that village. Sprague is listed as a “manufacturer of shingle,” in an apparent reference to the Kewaunee County mill site. Wife Mary, sons Edward (then 11), Louis, and Henry (both age 4), lived together with Mary's daughter Julia, another relative of Mary's on her mother's side, and—in an indication that the family was by no means destitute—a servant (United States Census 1860).

The mill appears in the census as well. In the 1859 season, the steam-powered mill employed 19 men and paid out an average of \$494 per month in wages. The company had invested about \$45,000 in the mill, but brought in 800,000 feet of logs worth \$50,000 and shipped out one million feet of lumber worth \$100,000. Converted into modern currency, Sprague, Owen & Co. invested over \$1.6 million dollars in the enterprise, were

expending \$18,200 a month in wages, shipped 3.5 million dollars worth of lumber, and had 1.8 million dollars worth of logs in their yards (United States Census 1860). It wasn't enough to keep the business afloat.

Gilbert Knapp—Sprague's own brother-in-law—sued Sprague in 1859, and a wide range of creditors—including Knapp and the City Bank of Racine—sued in 1860 (*Manitowoc Pilot* 1860a) (Figure 79). John J. Owens was sued by debt collector Joseph S. Cogswell the same year, and the pier in Kewaunee County was seized by the local sheriff and put up for public auction (*Manitowoc Pilot* 1860b, 1860c; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1860f). Just what happened to Sprague in the aftermath of the lawsuits is unclear. He died ca. 1867. Mary Sprague, widowed again, left Wisconsin and took her family to Illinois (United States Census 1870).

Sprague's partner John J. Owen, meanwhile, remade his life several times over and found better luck. At first, he remained in Sheboygan. He is listed as a produce dealer in that city in the 1870 census, living with his growing family, a housekeeper, and her children (United States Census 1870). Afterwards he moved to Chicago and took a position as a clerk in a loan office. It was the break he needed. Owen stayed in Chicago for over two decades, building a career as a money lender, private banker, and jewelry dealer (United States Census 1900; *Lancaster Teller* 1890). After retirement, he and Sarah relocated to Huntington, Indiana to be close to their youngest children (United States Census 1910; *Huntington Herald* 1906a). He died there in 1912; his body was taken back to Sheboygan for burial (*The Huntington Herald* 1912b).

George Wing characterized the Sprague & Owens pier as “purely a business venture,” co-owned by Sprague, Manseau, and Cogswell (Owen is not mentioned) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c, 1950). Certainly, there does not appear to have ever been a settlement on par with Dean's Pier/Carlton associated with the complex. A rare, if exceedingly brief, description of Sprague's venture written by settler Rollef Olsen Oien gives another glimpse of the mill's finances. Oien took employment with Sprague in 1854, at “a little sawmill, operated by steam.” Oien describes the ordeal of cashing in a promissory note for \$100 given to him by Sprague in lieu of wages (over \$3,000 in modern currency), needed to buy land for a homestead in Kewaunee County (*Skandinaven* 1899).

Later accounts, based in unknown proportions on lost references and local lore, indicate that after the conclusion of the final lawsuit the property was transferred into the ownership of Joseph Vilas, another Manitowoc lumberman, and then into the hands of former fisherman George R. Roberts (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1950). Roberts was owner of a steam pile driver and worked on several of the piers in Kewaunee County (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871e). Later newspaper accounts suggest that he manufactured shingles and lumber, though his occupation is listed as ‘farmer’ on the 1870 census records for Carlton Township (*Ahnapee Record* 1873a; United States Census 1870). If the pier was in operation, it was shipping very little and at small enough scales to fly under the radar of the local press. By 1875, Roberts was living in Ahnapee (Wisconsin State Census 1875). He later relocated to the Town of Clay Banks in Door County (United States Census 1880). No pier is shown on the 1876 plat map (J. Knaubler & Co. 1876). The short and trouble-filled life of the tiny pier and mill complex had come to an end.



## ***The Two Tales of Silver Creek Pier***

More is known about the pier complex at Silver Creek—or at least it seems that way at first glance. Upon closer inspection, certainty vanishes like mist in the morning sun. There are two tales of Silver Creek: the scant facts available in historic records and a fuller account told in local lore.

Let's start with the lore. In the mid-1850s, a pair of Chicago businessmen named Albert Wells and Alonzo B. Valentine founded a mill and pier community at Silver Creek, just as Sprague and Owens had south of Sandy Bay. The business was originally quite successful. The little port was briefly a rival to Ahnapee, shipping the usual forest products. It boasted a store, a blacksmith shop, a hotel, and a tannery (Vandervest 2007). The pier complex was managed by Captain Zebina Shaw (Figure 80), a Nova Scotian sailor who arrived in Wisconsin by way of Memphis and Chicago, and his Irish bride Katherine 'Kate' O'Brien Shaw (Figure 81). Captain Shaw made the acquaintanceship of George Fellows, Sr., father of the owner of Foscoro Pier, and began sailing with him in 1851. The elder Fellows persuaded Shaw to settle in Ahnapee, and he did so in 1855. An uncredited newspaper clipping (Lindacrayon n.d.) gives the same arrival date of 1855 and has Shaw sail the lumber schooner *Amalie* out of Ahnapee harbor, suggesting that he worked as a ship's captain for a time. Once in Ahnapee, Zebina and Katherine served as caretakers at hotels/boarding houses run by the owners of Ahnapee's piers. Wing has them still in Ahnapee, managing the Tremont House, as late as 1865 (Wing 1921–1922:92). At some point after that date, the Shaws moved to Silver Creek to manage the pier complex, setting up a farmstead of their own while working for Wells and Valentine (HistoryLady1 2013). In Silver Creek, Katherine gave birth to eleven children. Eight died during a diphtheria epidemic while Captain Shaw was sailing on the lake. Shaw's aged father, who by then had joined the couple in Wisconsin, served as the community's first schoolteacher (HistoryLady1 2019).



***Figure 80: Captain Zebina Shaw, from findagrave.com (accessed 2023).***

After the outbreak of the Civil War, however, the company found itself in the same situation as Sprague & Owens. They could not pay their creditors. At least some of their mill workers had gone south to fight for the Union, and mill worker Willet Wheeler was wounded at Shiloh (HistoryLady1 2013). Wells and Valentine, along with defendants Julia Wells, D. D. Haskell, and William Ackley, were sued by a creditor named Anson Bigelow. Bigelow won his case, and Silver Creek was transferred into his hands. Wells went bankrupt in 1868. The mill was shut down and dismantled and the pier complex was abandoned to the elements (*Algoma Record Herald* 1968; HistoryLady1 2019; Vandervest 2007). Zebina Shaw returned to the sailing life. He served as first mate on the *Bessie Boalt* in 1868, and purchased and captained the schooner *Falcon*, hauling lumber and Christmas trees south to Chicago (HistoryLady1 2013; Wing 1921–1922:38). Later, in



Figure 81: Katherine "Kate" Shaw (right), from ancestry.com (accessed 2023).

1926 or 1946, a descendant named Zeb Shaw sued all of the parties in the earlier court case, as well as many others, and it was revealed that Bigelow had never received clear title to the property (HistoryLady1 2019).

So what is the truth? First of all, there was a community known as Silver Creek, Wisconsin. It was situated near the lakeshore three to four miles north of Ahnapee (*Ahnapee Record* 1876f; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869j, 1871d). The little community is mentioned in newspapers starting in the late 1850s and survived as a placename into the early 1900s, though it never appeared on any map. It had a school (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871d). It even boasted a cheese factory in the 1890s (*Algoma Record* 1898b).

A suitable stream does enter Lake Michigan in that vicinity, in the south half of Section 7, Ahnapee Township. Albert Wells did purchase land along Silver Creek, though not along the lakeshore. Land patents indicate he bought a large parcel in Section 12 of Ahnapee Township, about a mile inland, in company with Nancy and William Hailey. One Henry H. Wells bought far more land in the vicinity, including other parcels in Sections 12, 13, and along the lakeshore in Sections 6 and 7. Most of the purchases were undertaken with others, suggesting a degree of land speculation (Bureau of Land Management 2023).

The firm of Wells & Co., "Wholesale and retail dealers in dry goods, groceries, provisions, clothing, boots and shoes, hardware and fancy goods" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1859b) was a player

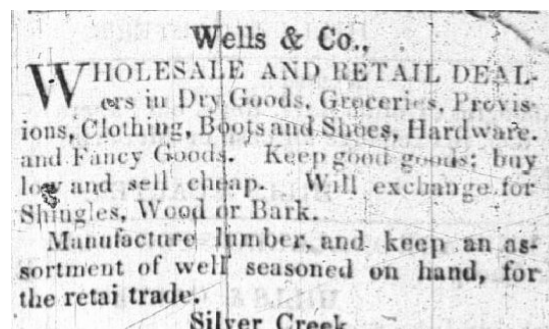


Figure 82: Advertisement in *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1859b.

in the local lumber trade in the late 1850s (Figure 82). The ‘Wells’ of Wells & Co. may have been Albert Wells, and the man behind ‘& Co.’ could have been Alonzo B. Valentine. The pair do appear together in a lawsuit in 1862, together with others with unknown relationships to the company. The Shaws are not among them (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1862a).

The firm ran advertisements drawing readers’ attention to their store at Silver Creek throughout much of 1859 and 1860. Based on those advertisements, the company’s holdings followed the familiar pattern of pier, pier store, and lumber dealership. The ads made clear that they were willing to barter goods in the store for shingles, tanning bark, and other forest products. Albert Wells, A. Valentine, and the other individuals identified in lore appear as defendants in the 1862 lawsuit, brought by Anson Bigelow (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1862a, 1862c). A single mention of the pier complex in February of 1869 lists Silver Creek’s 1868’s exports as 10,000 railroad ties, 20,000 cedar posts, and 10,000 cords of wood. No owner’s names are given (*Door County Advocate* 1869). Later that year, the *Kewaunee Enterprise* claimed that one Nic Vader had bought the pier complex, but retracted the claim in their next issue and corrected themselves to state that Vader had purchased Brant’s Pier in Door County instead (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869j, 1869k). Whoever the owner, no pier or pier store appears in Section 7 on the 1876 plat map (J. Knaubler & Co. 1876) and if a pier complex was associated with Silver Creek after 1869 it was defunct by 1875.

Zebina Shaw appears on the voter rolls for the Town of Ahnapee in 1855 (*Ahnapee Record* 1896b). The 1875 plat map identifies him as the owner of two large properties along Silver Creek in Sections 12 and 7 (J. Knauber & Co. 1876). These points of fact confirm that Zebina and Katherine Shaw established a farm near the pier complex (*Algoma Record* 1898b). They did have eleven children, and they did lose most to epidemic disease (*Algoma Record* 1902). Shaw’s family tree in Ancestry.com lists eleven children, and provides death dates of 1863 for four of them, suggesting that four of his six children (at the time) passed away during one of the epidemics that tore through the region after settlement. Sons John and Moses were the only identified survivors. In early 1880, a twin epidemic of diphtheria and scarlet fever struck Silver Creek. James, Effie, and little Nelly Shaw died, leaving the household nearly bereft of children for a second time (*Ahnapee Record* 1880b). The U. S. Census for 1880 lists the residents of his household as Shaw, wife Katherine, adult sons Moses and George Alvin, and school-aged son Frank (United States Census 1880).

So far so good. However, this is where the lore and history diverge. The 1862 lawsuit that names Wells and Valentine as defendants does not list the Silver Creek pier location among the properties foreclosed upon and no piers or mills are enumerated in the suit (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1862a, 1862c). Instead, the location in the published notice of the lawsuit is—quite perplexingly—in Section 6 where the Foscoro mill and pier complex would later stand.

Descendant Zeb Shaw did sue Anson Bigelow and others in 1946. The list of defendants named in the published summons is long, and includes Capt. Charles Fellows, former owner of the Foscoro complex; Hugh Acker, former owner of the Foscoro House hotel and saloon at Foscoro; C. B. Post, the Foscoro blacksmith; Orman Coe, an early owner of the Foscoro property; George Wing, the Kewaunee County newspaperman and historian and neighbor to the Silver Creek property; Albert Wells, Alonzo Valentine, Anson Bigelow, Anton Bigelow as the executor of the Anson

Bigelow estate, and Captain Zebina Shaw's sons George and Frank, as well as "...the unknown heirs of any and all such deceased and any and all unknown owners, lienors, or claimants of any right, title, interest or claim of any kind or nature whatsoever, and all persons whom it may concern" (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1946).

Shaw's appearances in written records betray little hint of lives in either the maritime or lumber trades after the 1850s. His occupation is listed as 'farmer' in the 1860, 1870, and 1880 census records (United States Census 1860, 1870, 1880). As for Shaw's ship, the *Falcon*, there was a lumber schooner by that name sailing Lake Michigan in the 1850s and 1860s. Shaw, however, does not appear as either master or owner in the Metzler database (Metzler 2023).

By 1879, Shaw's financial situation had deteriorated to the point that he couldn't pay his taxes. Attorney R. L. Wing offered to buy Shaw's mortgage from the County for \$115 in April 1879 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871f), but the County turned the offer down. A notice was run that Shaw's 40-acre farm in Section 12 was being put up for a sale "at a sacrifice" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879f, 1879m). It remained for sale for years—well after Shaw's death (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883e)—and never did get foreclosed upon. Katherine Shaw is shown as the property owner on the 1895 plat map (Roonie & Schleis 1895). Shaw's lakeshore properties, quite probably including the location of Silver Creek Pier, were sold off instead (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885c).

The brief newspaper account written in the aftermath of Shaw's death did not mention any connection to Silver Creek Pier. It barely mentioned Shaw at all. Shaw's friend George Fellows of Foscoro, grandson of the George Fellows who had brought him to Kewaunee County, broke the news to the *Ahnapee Record* that Shaw was found dead in the snowy woods near Whitefish Bay, lying next to his sleigh. The *Record* noted that he left "several" children behind along with his widow, and that the family was in "rather poor circumstances." The *Record* concluded, "Deceased was always industrious, but misfortune attended his doings and retarded his progress, which has reduced his family to this condition" (*Ahnapee Record* 1881a).

## Chapter Nine

### Close Neighbors and Distant Partners: Sandy Bay

Standing on the beach at Sandy Bay on a calm, sunny summer's day, one might be forgiven for thinking that a small piece of the Caribbean has been transported to Wisconsin. A beautiful sandy shore speckled with black and white pebbles curves off towards the north below pale bluffs. The lake waters shade from blue into a vibrant turquoise in the shallows. Only the willow trees overhanging the mouth of Fish Creek and the tops of the bluffs, standing where palm trees should wave, break the spell. The place gets its name from the mantle of soft sand that extends along the shoreline here, a kind counterpart to the drifted cobbles and scree found elsewhere along the coastline. Looming over everything is the massive bulk of the Kewaunee Power Station, a former nuclear power plant located on Stony Point, just to the south.

A sizable stream enters Lake Michigan at Sandy Bay, known by several names: Fish Creek, Fisher's Creek, McNally Creek, Sandy Bay Creek, and Bon Creek (Figure 83). While not on par with either the Wolf or Kewaunee Rivers, it is larger than the small creeks that provided water for the mill ponds at most of Kewaunee County's other rural commercial ports. It winds through a deep ravine some distance inland to a wetland formerly shaded by hemlock. Lakeview Drive sticks closely to the shoreline where it crosses the ravine. It is joined just south of the ravine by Sandy Bay Drive. The bridge is large and modern, and the sound of rushing water echoes to its west. Nothing about the place brings dead cows to mind, but for quite a time the community relied on them.

#### ***Squatters, Sailors, and Settlers at Sandy Bay (1851–1860)***

The shores of Sandy Bay were some of the first in Kewaunee County to be settled by non-Natives. Squatters and timber poachers filtered into the region before the Treaty of the Wolf River was signed and before Native peoples lost their rights to the land. John and Mary E. McNally were at the vanguard, beaten only by Antoine St. Peter and a few others. John McNally was born in Ireland in 1823 and immigrated to New York City with his parents in 1825. In 1840, the young McNally set out to become a sailor, taking berth on the whaling ship *Henry*. His time on the *Henry* lasted four years. On his return he found that there was opportunity for sailors worth their salt in the Great Lakes. His travels brought him to Racine in 1846. There he met and wooed wife Mary Ritter (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894b). In later years, McNally was known as a cheerful man of friendly and self-sacrificing character, traits that may have endeared him to Mary.

As St. Peter had done, McNally came north in a small fishing boat to find a homestead and timber to sell. When he saw Fish Creek, he must have realized its potential for milling power and timber transport and decided to make a claim. He made landfall on the shore of Sandy Bay and started work on a cabin. In his little boat were planks, which he intended to use to build a scow so that he could lighter shingles out to waiting schooners. Instead, he used the first of his stock to put a roof on his cabin (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870a). Antoine St. Peter, who had arrived with his family not long before, only realized that he had new neighbors when he stumbled across the small clearing McNally was carving out. Though sailing and fishing were McNally's areas of expertise, there was





*Figure 83: View inland from the mouth of Fish Creek at the Sandy Bay pier complex.*

timber for the taking. He pooled his resources with his father-in-law Hugh M. Ritter, and in the winter of 1851–1852 cleared land for a small farm. The partners hired on workmen, threw up a dam across Fish Creek, and built a small water-powered sawmill. They also built a pier—only the second, after Volk’s Pier in Kewaunee—to stretch out from Kewaunee County’s shores (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c) (Figure 84).

There was no formal network for shipping timber products from Kewaunee County at that time. Early timber poachers on Native lands spent their time cutting shingles and packing them into bundles and bolts. From time to time, small ships arrived from Manitowoc and sent their boats ashore to be loaded, ferrying the shingles out load by load (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1946c). Volk’s and McNally’s piers changed that process. For the first time, ships arriving at Kewaunee County’s shores were loaded directly. The piers took some of the fear out of life. The early squatters were very much isolated. With no nearby Euro-American settlements or markets, they had to rely on their own wits and the help of the few neighbors they had, Native or otherwise. If hunting was poor or seeds failed to sprout, larders emptied quickly. Famine, accident, and illness were ever-present companions. A pier brought ships. It drew ships in, and they came with new faces, new voices, new supplies, and the possibility of escape if such were needed.



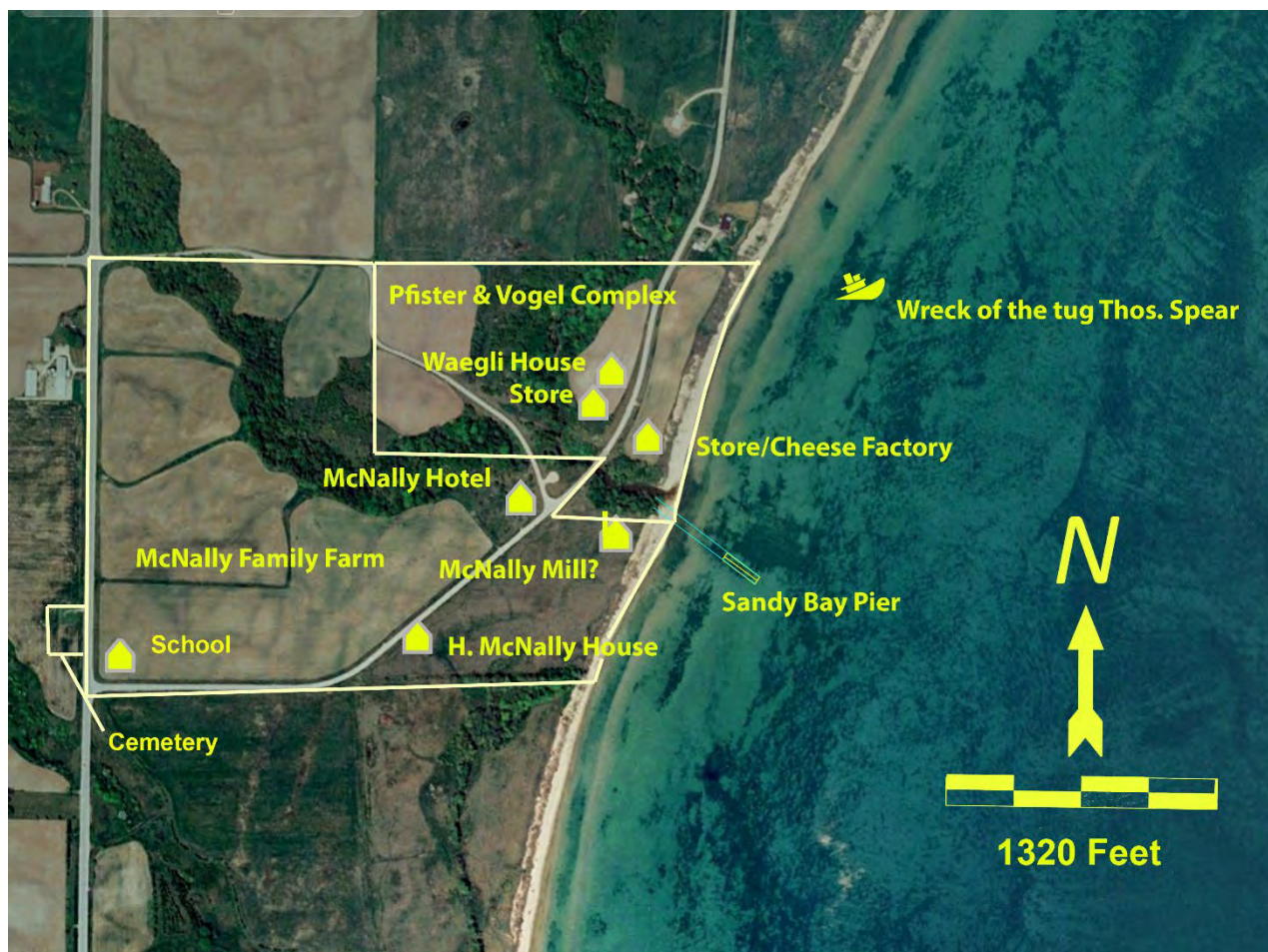


Figure 84: Map of the Sandy Bay pier complex.

McNally made good his claim after colonization was greenlighted. McNally and Ritter were some of the first Euro-Americans to arrive in Kewaunee County and took an interest in its transformation. Both took part in the early politics of the time, and employees of the McNally & Ritter mill served as electors when the county was first organized (Wing 1921–1922:18). As early as 1851, the year McNally arrived with his family, a meeting was held amongst the squatters filtering into the region to discuss the issue of a school. McNally allowed the small building to be built on the land he planned to claim. The following year, another meeting was held and a new school was put up on the farm of Bradford White, south of McNally’s holdings and nearer the shifting center of settlement. McNally’s sister-in-law Zeremiah Ritter took the position of schoolteacher. She later married George R. Roberts, who took over the Sprague mill complex and pier on Stony Point (Anonymous n.d.:1).

The small mill and its little pier, far from population centers at a time when the local infrastructure was barely a dream, attracted little attention. And yet, urbane hints of east coast and city life were already creeping in. In January of 1860, the people living along the shores of Sandy Bay organized a literary and debating club (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1860a). By then, Hugh Ritter was dead or was about to die (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1860d).

The pier was still known by Ritter's name, and it is as "Ritter's Pier" that the pier complex enters written history in a 1860 newspaper account reporting the death of worker Charles Parkhurst, who fell off the dam during an attempted crossing (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1860j, 1860k). The mill likewise is listed under Ritter's name in the 1860 manufacturing schedule of the United States census, compiled in 1859. At that time the family employed nineteen men. They had invested the equivalent of half a million dollars into the business, either directly or by obtaining loans and investments. The mill's production for 1859, despite a slightly smaller workforce and a far smaller investment, was equal to that of Dean & Borland's mill to the north—one million board feet of lumber worth \$100,000 (\$3.6 million in modern currency).

The family also had a 180-acre farm worth \$2,500 (around \$92,000 today), including 38 acres that were cleared or tilled. Their barns were home to two milk cows, a team of oxen, two other cattle, and a hog. The harvest, when it was brought in, included 85 bushels of wheat, 100 bushels of rye, 10 bushels of corn, 3 bushels of peas, and 80 bushels of potatoes. Mary McNally or some other help churned an impressive 100 pounds of butter. The family reported making 100 pounds of sugar and ten gallons of molasses in 1859. The origin of these sweet products is not explained—whether from maple sap, corn, or sorghum (United States Census 1860).

### ***The Tanning Trade (1860–1878)***

The *Kewaunee Enterprize* printed a rumor of extreme import to Sandy Bay in March of 1860. News had come to the publisher's ear that "two or three gentlemen" of capable means intended to build a tannery in the region. The gentlemen in question were Guido Pfister and Frederick Vogel, Sr.—names very familiar to students of Milwaukee history. Pfister and Vogel were Milwaukee Germans who met while working in the Schoelkoff tannery in Buffalo, New York. They came to Milwaukee independently, specializing in different aspects of the leather trade. Vogel built a tannery. Pfister opened a leather goods store. The two men realized that they would achieve more profit working together and approached their former employer in Buffalo for help. Fortunately, Schoelkoff was Vogel's cousin. He bankrolled the enterprise, and the partnership of G. Pfister & Co. was born in 1848. Within a year, the company had nearly captured the tanning and leather market in Milwaukee. Schoelkoff sold his shares in 1857, making a heady profit (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee 2023).

The company's expansion didn't slow down for decades, and after reincorporation, reshuffling, and a new name, the Pfister & Vogel Leather Company catapulted upwards to become the largest tannery west of the Alleghenies (Figure 85) (Encyclopedia of Milwaukee 2023). As the tannery grew, however, its need for supplies grew as well. The process of tanning leather relies on a chemical process that cures hides and prevents their further decay. The hide is first treated with a preservative such as salt, then soaked until unwanted organic matter falls away and the hide is soft. An alkaline solution (usually lime) is then applied in order to further dissolve unwanted materials and to expand the internal structure of the hide itself. Careful scraping, shaving, and shaping, in concert with an acid bath, represent the last step prior to tanning. As the name implies, tanning is made possible by tannic acid—a chemical derived from tannins produced by certain plant species. In the United States, there was no better source of tannin than hemlocks (Canham 2011).



*Figure 85: Pfister & Vogel Tanning Company complex in Milwaukee, ca. 1903. Wisconsin Historic Image 52862.*

There wasn't much hemlock around Milwaukee. There was a lot of it in Kewaunee County. A substantial stand lay just upstream from McNally's Mill. Pfister and Vogel scouted out the prospects and settled on two locations for branch business. McNally's mill was one of them. The other was located just a few miles to the south, where two small creeks entered Lake Michigan. Pfister and Vogel made arrangements to buy both. Their plan was simple. Farmers, loggers, and haulers would bring cords of bark to both places. McNally's mill, where the small pier already stood, was to be an export point only. Bark would be sent south to feed the Milwaukee tannery or shipped south around Stony Point to Two Creeks, where Pfister & Vogel built a brand-new tannery town (Wojta 1941).

Through the first half of the 1860s, Pfister & Vogel poured money into Two Creeks. They bought over 1,300 acres of land, hired a workforce of trained tanners, and supplied them with housing. The tannery was built, expanded, and then given a twin. By 1863, the little town boasted saw and planing mills, a boarding house and tavern, the usual general store, a blacksmith, a tailor and shoemaker, a wagon maker, and a butcher. It had a school and a telegraph office. The company laid rails three miles inland from the Two Creeks pier to expedite movement of bark and other saleable products for shipping. The fragrant schooners that called arrived from the south laden with fresh cow hides and departed full of tanned leather (Wojta 1941).

Sandy Bay, as a supply point, did not receive this amount of largesse. McNally ran his mill parallel to Pfister & Vogel's operation, however, and used the new and larger pier that the Milwaukee





*Figure 86: Detail from a promotional card advertising the quantity of tan bark available in northern Wisconsin, showing stacks of hemlock bark in an unidentified storeyard. Wisconsin Historic Image 94052.*

tanning firm built in 1861 to ship goods. Pfister & Vogel's enterprise boosted McNally's fortunes. The bark hauling and shipping operation promised more jobs than the mill could support on its own and workmen arrived to take them. A small cluster of buildings coalesced around the pier and pier road. Among them were McNally's cabin, farm buildings, and mill, work buildings and quarters for workers, and a leather and general store. Nearby were the bark yards. No direct description of the Sandy Bay bark yards survives, but it is likely they reproduced the yards at Two Creeks on a smaller scale:

...hundreds of cords of hemlock bark, cordwood and railroad ties were piled up. The peeled bark was four feet long and six tiers (one tier 4' x 16' x 300 feet) were grouped side by side to form a huge bark pile, covered with tilted roofs so as to shed water [e.g., Figure 86]. There bark piles were arranged in rows (six in a row), near to the tannery approximately 300 feet long and 24 feet wide. There were frequently from six to ten or more of these piles, and hundreds of cords of wood and railroad ties on the ground at one time (Wojta 1941:142–143).

In 1862, the call went out from Kewaunee for volunteers to fight for the Union. McNally enlisted, joining Company A of the Kewaunee Guards along with Borland, Dean, Dishmaker, and other Kewaunee boys. He was there at Jenkin's Ferry when Borland was hit. He survived the "infested swamps of Arkansas" and served with distinction until the Civil War ended. His fellow soldiers admired his courage, and it was later said that "...no better, braver, more patriotic, and self-sacrificing soldier entered the ranks than gallant John McNally." At the war's end, he returned to his mill and farm, and seldom left Kewaunee County again (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894b).

The first map of Sandy Bay was made in 1866, after McNally's return (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1877). The shoreside surveyors for the Lake Michigan coastal chart depicted a pier angling towards the southeast, the pier road, a road stretching directly inland from the pier complex (the forerunner of Sandy Bay Road), and a small cluster of buildings. Two are located north of Fish Creek, east of future Lakeview Drive. Based on later plat maps, one of these two buildings may have been the pier store. Three more buildings are shown south of the creek, on a rise between Lakeview Drive and the lake bluffs and should represent either Pfister & Vogel holdings or the McNally mill complex.

Life at Sandy Bay seems to have been a peaceful affair. Apart from mentions of various social events, the little community rarely entered the news. More attention was focused on the tannery town at Two Creeks, which was doing a roaring trade (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1866a). By early 1867, Two Creeks employed a workforce of 60, and its 290 tanning vats produced up to 40,000 sides of leather per season (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867b).

### *Reorganization*

1869 brought a change in ownership. That autumn, Guido Pfister sold his interest in the Two Creeks operation to Vogel but kept Sandy Bay for himself (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869r). Pfister's economic plan for his Sandy Bay property was brought into parity with the other piers along the coastline. Besides bark, Pfister bought and sold the usual forest products. During the 1870 season, ships arrived to pick up cargo 59 times. They were loaded with 2,454 cords of bark, as well as 1,750 cords of wood, 18,220 railroad ties, and 35,000 wooden flour barrel hoops. Only three of the ships sailed to Chicago. Milwaukee claimed the rest (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871a).

Operations were overseen by foreman and carpenter John Waegli. Waegli was a Swiss immigrant, born in 1830, who came to the United States with his parents and other family in 1851. Like many other immigrants to the region, he lingered in the southeastern portion of Wisconsin (Milwaukee and Waukesha) for a time before coming north (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1916b). Waegli was supplied as needed by his employer in Milwaukee. In early 1871, he was the grateful recipient of a pair of fine horses, shipped north from the city. Both died "a short time" after arrival (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871b).

John McNally was Waegli's neighbor, and still ran the mill next to the pier when the water in Fish Creek raised the water up high enough to do so (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870a). He continued to farm, and the value of his farmland rose to \$3,000. He employed at least one farmhand, and paid out \$80 in wages. His farm holdings included four milk cows, a team of oxen, seven other cattle, and fifteen sheep, together adding another \$470 to his assets. His farm only added another acre into cultivation over the prior ten years, and that year's harvest of wheat and oats was slimmer than the one recorded for 1859. He pressed fifteen tons of hay. The "forest products" column in the agricultural census recorded a yearly take of zero (United States Census 1870).

The 1871 hauling season started off well (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871c). As the season wound down, however, Waegli, the "gentlemanly foreman" had purchased only 12,000 railroad ties, 1,200 cords of wood, 1,000 cedar posts, and a paltry 700 cords of bark (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871e). When the Great Fire ravaged Kewaunee County, Sandy Bay's position well south of the burn line

saved Waegli and Pfister from the large losses incurred at the northern piers, but Waegli is listed amongst those who lost small stockpiles. One-hundred and fifty cords of bark went up in flames (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871s). John Whitaker nearly bemoaned the lack of incident to report upon:

Editor *Enterprise*: I have waited a long time for some accident to happen to somebody, or for something to transpire that would be of interest to your readers, but I have waited in vain, for the people around here insist upon taking care of their lives, limbs and property, regardless of the editor or reporter. The great fire that raged with such force in the northern part of our county, carrying death and destruction on its wings, and throwing suffering and mourning like a mantle over so many families, favored us...(*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871v).

### *Reconsolidation, Reinvention, and Robbery*

The following year saw far better business. During three weeks in January and February of 1872, Waegli stockpiled the same amount of tan bark (700 cords) that he had managed to gather during the previous year's season (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872c). By April, his yards contained over 1,000 cords, as well as 1,400 cords of wood, 24,000 railroad ties, and 5,000 cedar posts (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872e). In Milwaukee, Pfister and Vogel were rearranging their business interests yet again. The Two Creeks and Sandy Bay holdings were reconsolidated under the name Pfister & Vogel Leather Co. Waegli was retained as the manager at Sandy Bay (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872g).

Sandy Bay underwent a building boom after the reconsolidation. In July of 1872, Waegli arranged to have the bridge portion of the pier rebuilt (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872j). The following spring, ice destroyed portions of the pier itself. The post office was reopened and one Charles Ulmer, who presumably worked in the complex, served as postmaster. It seems to have been a somewhat lax affair, since part of the arrangements consisted of Ulmer asking mail carrier George Kessler if he was okay with the proposal. He "didn't have any objection to supply the office," said Ulmer, but clarified that "that is just the thing with George—he can't refuse anything, even if a nice young girl is asking him for a free ride" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873i). A telegraph office opened. The damaged pier received attention too. Thanks to "Messrs. Roberts & Johnson" and their steam pile driver, work began on the first stages of a 400-foot extension completed in 1874.

Waegli built himself a new house, and when it was finished built a new and larger store. He needed the new house. He needed more room. By then, he and exhausted wife Francis Hummel Waegli had eight children. The youngest son at the time, Guido Waegli, was named after Guido Pfister. John and Francis would go on to have at least four more children. John McNally's 24-year-old son Henry and a man named Clarkson put up new houses as well (*Ahnapee Record* 1874g; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873i, 1873l).

John McNally turned 50 in 1874 and Mary was 48. They sought a gentler means of making a living. The hospitality business called to them, just as it did to Henry Grimm. The McNallys renovated their home and christened it 'Lakeside House'. It became the midday stage stop between Two Rivers and Kewaunee. McNally took out ads:



Lakeside House. John McNally, Proprietor, situated on the lake shore road near Sandy Bay P. O. In opening my house to the traveling public I will do my best to accommodate all who may favor me with a call (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874d).

The staff at the *Kewaunee Enterprise* were in favor of the venture. They called attention to the establishment and its advertisements (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874a, 1874d). “Mr. and Mrs. McNally will use their guests, as we know by experience, in such a way that they will leave hoping to come back again,” said one such notice (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874a). Another informed readers that “Mr. and Mrs. McNally spare no pains to make their guests feel at home, and their charges are reasonable” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874d).

As July of 1874 turned to August, a gang of thieves broke into the store. The store clerk, arriving to open up in the morning, found a hole cut into a window and “17 shelves entirely cleaned out of the most valuable dry goods”. The thieves loaded their haul onto a wagon and drove north to try again at Carlton but woke up Fred Bach instead (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874j). The following week thieves made an attempt at the Shimonek boot and shoe store in Kewaunee; as at Carlton, someone sleeping inside woke up and scared them away (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874k). A few days later, Charles Brandis of Kewaunee heard noise in the night, and went out and found two horses loose and the horse thieves on his property. He shot at the fleeing thieves but missed (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874l). By then everyone was sleeping lightly, with guns close to hand and “a few ‘Arkansas toothpicks’ within convenient reach.” George Wing, up in Ahnapee, thought that the incidents were connected, and that the thieves were working their way up the coast (*Ahnapee Record* 1874m). The “manager of the Sandy Bay store” (likely Waegli) wasn’t sure. He had a search warrant drawn up for the home of one S. Roth, but no stolen goods were found (*Door County Expositor* 1874a).

1875 brought a return to quieter and less felonious times, but change was on the horizon. Workers were laid off at both the Sandy Bay and Two Creeks locations due to “the hard times” (*Ahnapee Record* 1875o). Chicago’s post-fire rebuilding boom was over and regional demand for timber products was slipping. Shipping wound down in September 1875 with twenty-six cargos—half as many as in previous years—taken south (*Ahnapee Record* 1875t). Talk turned to farming, and John McNally’s prize apple trees dominated the local conversation.

Those fine apples of McNalley’s are a continual eye sore to all the boys of the neighborhood. The several cases of *cholera morbus* are charged by the parents upon Mr. McNally, they—the parents—claiming that he should not hold out such an alluring temptation to their innocent offspring (*Ahnapee Record* 1875s).

That November, Henry McNally wrote the *Enterprise* and reported that John Waegli was buying farmland from Pfister, Vogel & Co., and that Waegli intended to make his residency in Kewaunee County permanent. The McNallys were happy at the prospect. “John is a good citizen and neighbor,” Henry wrote, “and we are glad he is going to make a permanent home with us” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875w). The land Waegli was buying was the Pfister & Vogel company farm. Like Taylor, Bach & Co., Pfister, Vogel & Co. established a farm of their own where fodder and food were grown to support their pier complex and to sell in the cities. By May of 1876, the farm was Waegli’s. He set about farming life (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876e).



Figure 87: 1876 plat map of the Sandy Bay pier complex (J. Knauber & Co. 1876).

### Sandy Bay in 1876

Sandy Bay in 1876 was very different than the Sandy Bay of 1866. From a small, family-run mill at the edge of a shaded forest, the complex had evolved into a farming hamlet and export point for one of the larger businesses in Milwaukee (Figure 87). De Wayne Stebbins, writing to the *Ahnapee Record*, noted the changes:

Carlton and Sandy Bay. Business called us to the above named communities last week—the oldest settled section in Kewaunee county. We noticed many marked improvements since last here. The old log cabin has been exchanged for large, and even elegant frame residences, surrounded by every indication of thrift, while extensive clearings covered with ripening fields of golden grain gave evidence of a substantial wealth. Farmers were busily engaged in the fields harvesting. They report that a very fair crop of all grains will be realized, rust and weevil to the contrary... At Sandy Bay we had an opportunity of seeing the oldest house in the county. It stands on the farm of Mr. John McNally, and was erected twenty-five years ago. Mr. McN. was one of the first pioneers. Messrs. Pfister and Vogel own the pier and store at this point. Sandy Bay people claim the store to be the best stocked country establishment in the county. The shipping business is reported very dull here. The productive forests that once surrounded the burg have been stripped of their wealth, and the halcyon days of ties, posts, bark and cordwood are no more. The same thing may be said of many Kewaunee County ports. Carlton people are noticed for their sociability. Just now they have a hall in course

of building and nearly completed, at the corners a mile north of Sandy Bay, which is to be devoted to purposes of amusement and literary recreations. An amateur theatrical company have now in the course of rehearsal two plays entitled “Jonas Jones” and “Limerick Boy” which will be rendered in a week or two for the benefit of the new hall. A town library is being talked of seriously (*Ahnapee Record* 1876h).

The 1876 plat map depicts a small selection of the buildings present at the Sandy Bay complex (J. Knauber & Co. 1876). The pier is shown, of course. Pfister and Vogel’s holdings are concentrated north of Fish Creek, and the McNally holdings south of the creek, though the boundary line between them is dotted and likely was not well demarcated on the ground. The Pfister and Vogel complex included the store east of Lakeview Drive and north of Fish Creek and the pier road. Across from it on the west side of Lakeview Drive are two other buildings on Pfister & Vogel property. One is almost certainly Waegli’s house. The other may be a boarding house, worker’s house, or other special purpose structure. Other buildings, including a blacksmith shop, warehouse, barns, and stables were present, but were not considered important enough to include or identify.

To the south, across the ravine and still on the west side of the road is the Lakeside House/John McNally home. The next property south was owned by Henry McNally; his home was located on the east side of Lakeview. The community’s school sat on Henry McNally’s land, just over one-half mile southwest of the pier, at the intersection of what is now Highway 42 and Lake View Road. Just west, on the other side of future Highway 42, was the community cemetery.

The McNally mill is not depicted on the map, but was still standing. In fact, no structures are shown east of the road and south of the ravine where the little cluster of buildings stood in 1866. The final structure—the bridge over Fish Creek—was, by 1876, beginning to show signs of age. “...The ‘powers that be’ had better ‘look a leetle out,’ or they may have a bill of damages on their hands,” warned the newspapers (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876h).

The coming year was the last year of Pfister & Vogel’s management. As 1877 dawned, a ‘For Sale’ advertisement ran in the local papers:

For Sale. We offer for sale very cheap our place at Sandy Bay, in the town of Carlton, Kewaunee County including about 35 acres of land under cultivation. Store built two years ago. Pier rebuilt two years ago. Storehouse, barns, stables, blacksmith shop, and several dwellings. For price and terms apply to Milwaukee office. Pfister & Vogel Leather Company (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877a).

Vogel came north to look the property over. While Vogel was visiting, Waegli bought a flock of sheep; the local correspondent interpreted the move as a sign that “he intends to make a thorough business of his farming” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877b). Waegli hadn’t stepped down from his position as manager of the pier complex, however. He continued to buy for the company while the future of the pier was considered. Waegli disbursed about \$1,000 per week, for “large quantities” of bark, ties, and cord wood (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877c). As late as March he was bringing in 50 cords of bark per day in addition to other forest products. The pier needed additional repairs, and he used his carpentry skills to complete them. Vogel and H. Reuss, manager of the Two Creeks

complex, inventoried the store's stock (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877h). After they finished, the store closed to await its new owner (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877i).

The process of winding down Pfister & Vogel's operations continued through the summer and early autumn. The full pier yards had to be cleared. The schooner *Josephine Lawrence* shuttled bark and other goods to Milwaukee, "making good time" while doing so (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877q). Unlike earlier days, there was no workforce to help. That season, Waegli and sons Charley, Frank, and John, pried the company's purchases for shipping by themselves. The four men and one team of horses moved 758 cords of bark, 900 cords of wood, and 2,000 railroad ties onto the pier so that they could be loaded onto the *Josephine*. This, in addition to farming 50 acres. The *Kewaunee Enterprise* took note of the achievement, asking "Who has done more?" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877r).

Behind the scenes, Waegli had a reason to work so hard. He began to sell land (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877s, 1877y). His reasons for doing so weren't clear to his neighbors immediately (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877y). At the end of the year, the announcement was made that Pfister & Vogel's holdings in Kewaunee County were beginning to sell (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877ff). Waegli was preoccupied with other concerns. Two of his children, Rudolph and Josie, were ill with diphtheria (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878a). He knew full well how many small plots in local cemeteries were filled due to the dread disease, and how swiftly it would spread. At the time, he had four children under the age of ten in his home. All would thankfully survive.

Not long afterwards, in late February, Henry McNally and John Whitaker solved the mystery of Waegli's recent sales. Waegli was raising the money necessary to buy the Sandy Bay complex. He managed to accrue \$4,000 (over \$120,000 in modern currency), which bought him 600 acres, the pier, and the store (*Ahnapee Record* 1878a). As for Pfister & Vogel, they decided not to sell Two Creeks. Instead, they resumed operations at a smaller scale. Waegli was brought on to supervise renovations to the tannery, despite being busy at Sandy Bay. Waegli let it be known that he intended to reopen the store and resume trading forest products (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878d). Waegli looked to Carlton as an example of good pier management and made a trip south to Sheboygan County with one William Zoebraut to investigate the region's cheese factories (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878e). Shipping resumed in April, with a cargo of ties carried by the *E. Scoville* (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878g).

McNally's mill stood idle after his 'retirement' to run the Lake Side House. In spring of 1878, either McNally, Waegli, or their respective children dismantled it. It was only the first of many pieces of the complex to be razed over the next few years (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878j). Waegli tore more portions of the complex down in 1880 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880a). Mentions of shipping and lumber purchases essentially cease at this point, though uneven newspaper coverage of the rural ports may obscure later activity. Waegli may have found the pier and lumber trade too much to handle. He was still overworked, though handled it well.

Last week the engineer at Two Creeks was called suddenly away, and John Waegli of this place, was called to handle the throttle valve until his return. It makes no difference to John whether he undertakes to run a store, build a barn,

manage a farm, make a barrel, or run a steam engine. In every case he is the right man in the right place (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878k).

The pier was still standing and would for many years. It appears in the summer of 1880 as a place where visitors came to fish (*Ahnapee Record* 1880m).

The agricultural schedule for the 1880 Federal Census gives one last detailed glimpse of the community. Waegli's farm was a decent one, spread out over fifty acres of tilled fields, five acres of meadow, and 310 acres of forestland. It was worth \$2,800 (about \$85,000 in modern value). He owned a team of oxen, a team of horses, three milk cows, six other head of cattle, and a small flock of sheep. A chicken coop on the farm held fifteen chickens that laid 55 eggs. That year, he cut fifteen cords of wood from his own property, and harvested 165 bushels of oats, 290 bushels of wheat, 140 bushels of peas, and 100 bushels of potatoes. There is no record that he paid wages to farm laborers that year, and he and his sons likely were handling it all themselves again.

McNally's neighboring farm was more open than it had been. Nearly twice as much land was under cultivation, and his labor costs rose to \$120. His woodlots were shrinking; woodchoppers cut twenty-five cords of wood in 1879. The farm was worth about \$3,000 (around \$91,000 today). He owned five milk cows, two horses, a flock of 20 sheep, and 23 chickens that laid 69 eggs. He planted the same crops as Waegli, but also had that tempting apple orchard enticing local children into petty theft and bellyaches (United States Census 1880).

### ***Sinking of the Thomas Spear (1880)***

Just before noon on September 24, 1880, a dense, trailing column of smoke rose skyward from Lake Michigan, mingling with the thickening fog that hovered over the lake. The tug *Thomas Spear* (Figure 88) was on fire and making with all possible speed for Sandy Bay.

The tug was practically brand new. She was built in Sturgeon Bay in 1880 by the Spear Brothers, who owned a fleet of tugs working Lake Michigan. Machinery taken from the tug *Home* was incorporated into her workings. George O. Spear, her owner, was also her registered master. The day of her sinking, Captain E. F. Burnham was at her helm. That season, the *Thomas Spear* was given the job of towing stone scows from Ahnapee to Two Rivers. She had just completed one such run and set out in the morning with the empty scows in tow for Ahnapee. At approximately 11:30 AM, Captain Burnham returned to his quarters to change his clothing. He emptied his pockets on the bed. As he did so, fire broke out in the room where the ship's oil and wood fuel were stored. Alarms sounded.

The fire-fighting apparatus on the ship required use of a pony pump in that very same room. One of the firemen tried to get the pump going, but retreated when his hair and beard curled and singed and the room turned into an inferno. Pails were fetched. The men formed a futile bucket chain, even as they readied the tug for evacuation. Captain Burnham ordered the stone scows cut loose. The crew launched the ship's boat. A few moments more and still a mile and a half away from the pier, the situation became untenable, and the order was given to abandon ship (*Algoma Record* 1880s; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880l).



The flaming hull of the *Thomas Spear* drifted alone for a time while the crew pulled for shore. The smoke and flames attracted the attention of Captain Larson of the schooner *H. Rand*, and he turned towards the *Thomas Spear*, circling the vessel and searching for sailors in the water. Burnham and his weary men, meanwhile, were making their way up the pier road to the telegraph office in Waegli's store, where they reported the disaster. Visibility and weather conditions continued to deteriorate. Finding no one to save, the *H. Rand* continued on her way (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880).

The tug *John Gregory* arrived at sunset. A. M. Spear, another of the Spear brothers, was onboard. The *John Gregory* searched fruitlessly for the drifting stone scows in the dense fog, then turned back towards Ahnapee for the night. Meanwhile, the smoldering and charred remains of the *Thomas Spear* drifted shoreward and grounded, still on fire, in the shallows. Smoke gave way to steam, and then to silence. The tug's contents, including the Captain's pocket money and wallet, log books, and crew's belongings, were ash. The vessel was insured, however, and both Captain and owner left with the intention of purchasing a replacement tug. The wayward scows drifted towards Kewaunee and grounded north of the city, where they were picked up by the *John Gregory* (*Algoma Record*, 1880s; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880).

Historical Collections of the Great Lakes  
Bowling Green State University



Figure 88: Photograph of the second tug *Thomas Spear*, replacement for and twin to the first tug *Thomas Spear* that sank at Sandy Bay. From the Historical Collections of the Great Lakes, Bowling Green State University.

The sinking of the *Thomas Spear* set off a long saga, centering on the ship's machinery. Just as items had been taken from the tug *Home* and put to new use, there was thought of salvaging the engine and boiler from the *Thomas Spear* and putting them in yet another vessel. The salvage rights sold from one claimant to another for years. The first to try was "Capt. Williams of Manitowoc," who bought the remains of the tug for \$1,700. He obtained the services of a dredge scow and planned to raise the hull and convert it into a steam barge in Manitowoc (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881i). The attempt failed. Next up was Capt. John McDonald of Ahnapee, who accompanied one of the Spear brothers on a tour to Two Creeks and decided to look the remains over with an eye towards raising them himself (*Ahnapee Record* 1881r). He didn't.

George Roberts and James Ross of Ahnapee tried next, with a plan to raise the machinery using block and tackle (*Ahnapee Record* 1882i; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882d). It didn't go well, and a new approach was formulated (*Ahnapee Record* 1882o; *Weekly Expositor Independent* 1882a). By the end of June 1882, a "monstrous wooden horse" stood on each side of the wreck, "supporting a powerful stump puller." The idea was to straighten the wreck up first, as the hull had rolled over onto its side. The wooden horse method failed as well, and Roberts and Ross returned to Ahnapee to think things through (*Ahnapee Record* 1882q; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882f). They were down, but not out. They made plans to return to Sandy Bay with a tug and scows, thinking that a little more horsepower would do the trick (*Ahnapee Record* 1882r). Another attempt was made in July 1883, or so the *Kewaunee Enterprise* reported, "...but with what success [Ross] has met we have not yet been able to learn" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883i). Apparently, none, since Roberts was back for another failed attempt in July of 1884.

In 1887, Holver Johnson of Two Creeks, with partners Louis and Olaf Anderson, arrived. He had purchased the rights from Roberts & Ross or from others they had sold to. Johnson's strategy was the winning one. He built a scaffold around the wreck, anchored into the lake bottom with post pilings, then used that as a frame to support a stump puller. Up came the six by twelve foot boiler, by then filled with sand (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887f). It was at that point that Johnson realized he had no way to take the boiler anywhere and went up into Kewaunee looking for a scow. The last mention of the ordeal simply stated that the men were back at work raising the hull and "succeeding admirably" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887h). Chances are that the hull came apart instead. A couple of weeks later, "a large quantity of burned lumber and parts of the rail of a vessel badly burned" washed up on the beach (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887i). Deteriorating weather put an end to the work (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1887j). The following summer, Johnson and the Albertsons finally managed to free the rest of the machinery from the vessel. "The engine, shaft, and wheel are in comparatively good condition," said the writers at the *Door County Independent* (1888c).

### ***Sandy Bay Fades Away***

While these events were unfolding offshore, Sandy Bay sank back into obscurity. The coming and going of the salvor teams replaced the arrival and departure of the lumber and bark schooners in local interest. In April of 1881 Michael Weiner, a merchant in Norman, made an offer for the pier. The pier was shorter than it had been. A few weeks prior to Weiner's proposal, fifty feet of its length was destroyed by shifting ice or high waves (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881i). Whether or not Weiner's offer was intended as a lease or purchase offer is unclear. The property remained in Waegli's hands and Weiner bought wood in May, but there was local uncertainty over whether he

intended to ship his goods by rail or by water (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881m). A guide to Wisconsin businesses for 1882 notes that goods could be sent from Sandy Bay “direct by lake,” indicating that the pier was at least operational. The store may not have been. McNally’s hotel is the only Sandy Bay business listed in the guide (Hogg & Wright Co. 1882:42, 610).

Just a year later, rumors spread that John Waegli was planning to leave for the Dakotas (*Ahnapee Record* 1883d; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883b, 1883c). They proved to be false and Waegli remained at Sandy Bay. He kept up his carpentry skills. They were applied to bridges rather than the pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1885a, 1885d, 1886n). With no upkeep, the complex deteriorated. Scott’s Coast Pilot Guide for 1888 does not mention Sandy Bay and skips directly from Two Creeks to Dean’s Pier (Scott 1888). By 1891, the pier was “rotted away” and the store and other buildings stood empty (*New Era* 1891) (Figure 89).

Waegli was still there, however, as were John and Mary McNally. The aged couple kept taking in guests to entertain at Lakeside House. In 1891, Waegli remembered his earlier investigation of the cheese business, and built a factory for Sandy Bay. He hired a “practical” cheesemaker to take charge (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1891b). The factory was set up north of Fish Creek, on the east side of Lakeview Road, and appears on the 1895 plat map where the original pier store once stood (Figure 90). Another building on the west side of Lakeview is identified as the post office. Given that the post offices at the pier complexes were usually included in stores rather than purpose-built buildings, this structure may have been a later store, social hall, or other structure. Waegli’s home stands north of the post office (Roonie and Schleis 1895). The Sandy Bay cheese factory operated under Waegli’s ownership until May of 1900, when a chimney fire burned it to the ground.



Figure 89: Detail of photograph of the ruins of the Sandy Bay pier. Date unknown. Courtesy Kewaunee County Historical Society. Note ‘T’-shaped extension at pier’s end.



Figure 90: 1895 plat map of Sandy Bay (Roonie and Schleis 1895).

Workers for Crosbymeyers, a Chicago cheese company that had leased the building, managed to evacuate the cheese (*Algoma Press* 1900).

John McNally died in 1894 of ‘consumption’ (tuberculosis or another lung ailment) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1894a). Waegli moved to Kewaunee just after the turn of the century. He passed away of natural causes at his home there in 1916 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1916a). The two men saw Sandy Bay come, and they saw it go.

## Sandy Bay Today

### 2022 Investigations: Maritime and Shoreline Survey

The remains of the Sandy Bay Pier lie on a heading of 126 degrees (Figures 91 and 92). Overall, the pier measures 44 feet in width. At least 21 pilings are still standing, submerged in six to 12 feet of water. The surviving portion of the pier extends from 379 feet to 510 feet from shore. It is likely that more pilings exist closer to shore, but are covered by sand and rocks. Visibility at the site was low during the underwater survey, and additional pilings likely exist that were not recorded during the survey. The 21 pilings that were recorded all measure approximately one foot in diameter.



# Sandy Bay Dock KE-114

Kewaunee County, Wisconsin

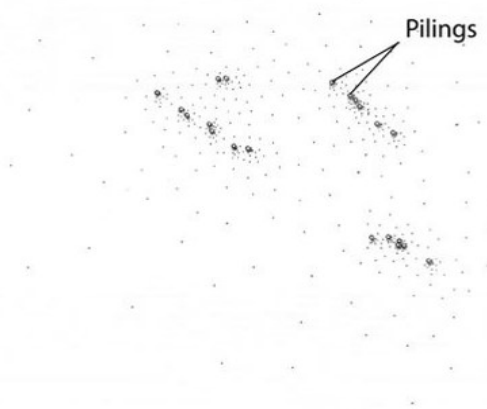
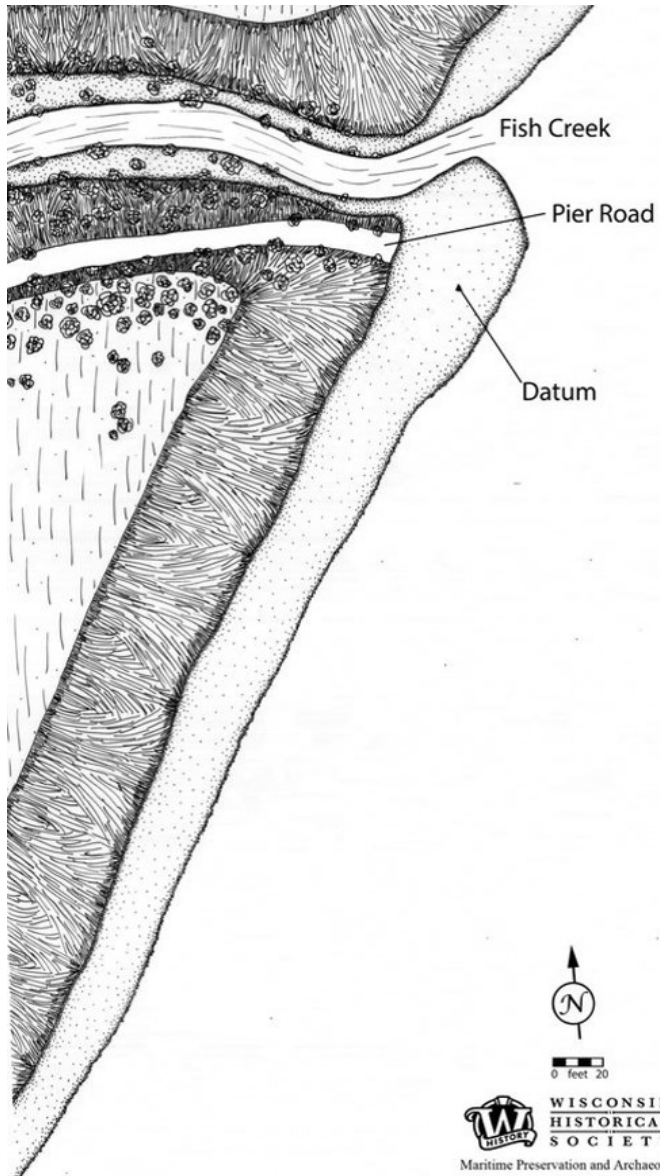


Figure 91: Map of extant pilings at Sandy Bay pier identified in 2022.

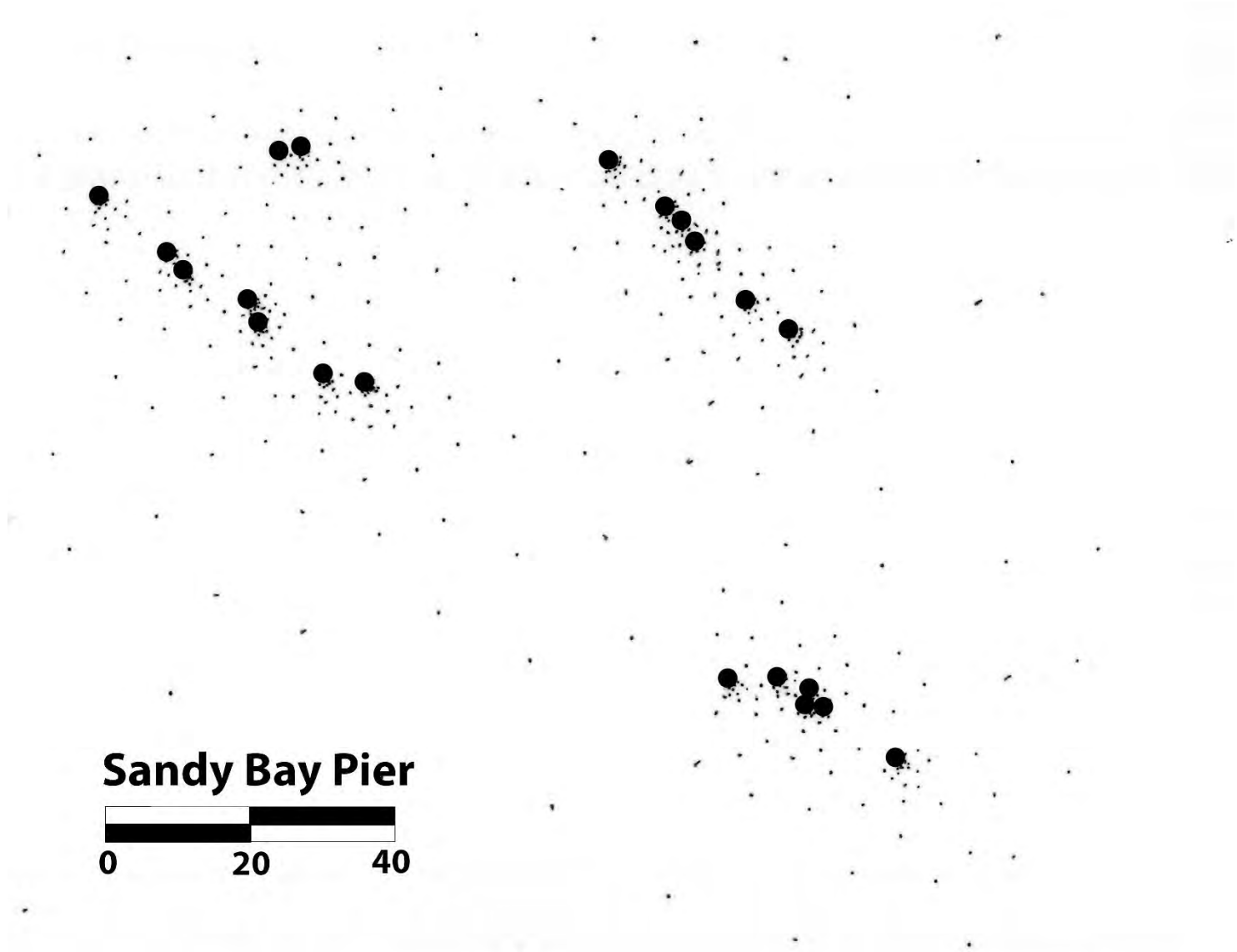


Figure 92: Detail map of extant pilings at Sandy Bay pier identified in 2022.



The spacing of the pilings is irregular, but a general pattern of the pilings' layout can be seen. The Sandy Bay Pier appears to have been supported by three rows of paired pilings extending out from shore, with multiple instances of four single pilings arranged in a square. These single pilings were spaced further apart than other groups or pairs of pilings, and piles of small rocks were found scattered in the area. With no other timbers located along the lake bottom, it was not possible to determine if the piles of stones represent crib fill or other construction features meant to strengthen the pier, or if they formed naturally.

No submerged artifacts were located during the site survey, although as noted visibility at the site was cloudy. Landward, the pier's access road was easily located during the survey, extending down the bluff along the north side of the stream's outlet, lining up exactly with the pier.

### *2022 Investigations: Survey of Pier Road and Field South of Fish Creek*

In 2022, landowners granted our project permission to investigate a portion of the bluffs above the pier. A field just south of the ravine, bordered by Lake Michigan on the east and Lakeview Drive on the west, was chosen for the initial survey because structures appear there on the 1866 Lake Michigan chart (U. S. Lake Survey 1866/1877).

The survey area is covered with tall grass, small (one to two-foot) shrubs and saplings, larger honeysuckle bushes, and other scrubby brush (Figure 93). The northern border of the field is overgrown with thicker brush, transitioning to a forest cover at the ravine margin. The remains of a



*Figure 93: Photograph of the blufftop area south of Fish Creek surveyed and subjected to ground penetrating radar (GPR) in 2022–2023. Blue flags mark metal-detector hits.*





*Figure 94: Photograph of the pier road at Sandy Bay, which is still used for beach access by the landowners, looking towards the beach.*

fallen barbed-wire fence are partially buried along the ravine edge. A series of mowed paths used by security personnel crisscross the field and connect with the former pier road.

The pier road itself is still in use as a two-track (Figure 96) and is used by the security team and others to access the beach below. It winds down the south side of the Fish Creek ravine and ends in a short, vertical drop-off at the former base of the Sandy Bay pier, recording both inland erosion of the coastline and the elevation of the bridge portion of the pier. Walkover survey of the pier road failed to identify artifacts or features of interest. During conversations with LLPCP crew members, a representative of the security team revealed that the beach and adjoining areas are periodically cleaned up, since they are sometimes used by teenagers and partiers trespassing on the site. Some piled cordwood and driftwood was observed at the mouth of the creek, stockpiled there by trespassers intent on building bonfires, and a possible pier piling—though whether of older or more recent origin is unknown—was spotted in a pile of driftwood at the base of the lake bluffs. Charred planks were similarly found under the northern side of the Lakeview Drive bridge over Fish Creek in 2023. These activities, and the landowner’s response to them, likely explain the complete lack of artifacts and middens relating to the Sandy Bay community in the ravine and on the beach.

An initial metal detector sweep was conducted within the survey area in 2022, with the goal of confirming whether or not traces of 19<sup>th</sup> century life survive on the bluffs above the pier. A number of ‘hits’ were obtained and three were randomly chosen for investigation. Two were located at the margin of the tree line on the north edge of the survey area. When opened as part of shallow shovel tests, the two hits along the ravine edge proved to consist of one ox shoe and a probable drift punch. This latter object is a solid piece of iron, approximately six inches long and one-half inch in diameter, with one tapering rounded end and one squared end. If the identification of this item is correct, it was used either to align or fasten wood or metal parts together, or to prepare holes in wood or metal for such pins. The third hit was located a short distance out into the field, nearer the bluff edge. It consisted of a four inch-long section of the blade of a large woodworking file.

Deteriorating weather conditions put an end to further investigation of the site during the 2022 season. However, the limited work was sufficient to confirm that 19<sup>th</sup> century deposits belonging to the McNally/Sandy Bay complex remain intact on the blufftops at the same place where early structures are shown on the 1866/1877 chart. A research design for a second round of fieldwork was proposed to the landowners, and they generously agreed to let LLPCP team members return to the site in early spring of 2023.

### *2023 Investigations: Metal Detector Survey South of Fish Creek*

A small team returned to Sandy Bay in the first week of May 2023. Vegetation on the field was lower, as spring growth had not yet begun in earnest and the winter’s snowpack had flattened the grass cover down somewhat. The pier road was walked a second time. Though more favorable vegetation conditions were present (leaf-out was just getting underway), no artifacts or middens were observed. A stone dump was spotted at the far northeastern corner of the bluff edge, on the south side of the ravine, in an area of ground that has slumped downward, but again no artifacts were present.

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) specialist Dr. Dan Joyce set up a grid within the previous survey area, extending 24 meters south from the field edge on the north and 20 meters west from the edge of the lake bluff (Figure 95 and 96). While this activity, made quite difficult by the scrubby field cover, was underway (see Appendix A), the remainder of the crew conducted a systematic metal detector survey of the field. The surveyed area covered the entirety of the GPR grid, extended a short distance past it to the south, and well beyond it on the west. The locations of the ox-shoe and drift pin tests were relocated; the file fragment test could not be found. All hits were marked by pin flags.

At the conclusion of the metal detector sweep, the hits were surveyed in using a total station, as were the northwestern, southwestern, and southeastern corners of the GPR grid. The final corner could not be read by the total station due to its position in thick brush. The total station location was tied into the southeastern bridge abutment and the pavement edge of Lakeview Drive.

Two clear concentrations of metal objects were identified during the metal detector survey (Figure 96). Concentration 1 is located along the margin of the lake bluff in the southeastern corner of the GPR grid. It spills over the edge of the grid somewhat to the south. Three tests were opened in this





Figure 95: Areas investigated 2022–2023 at Sandy Bay. Blue areas surveyed using metal detector and remote sensing (GPR) methods. Orange areas subjected to walkover and limited surface survey. Positions of McNally house/Lake View House, later store, and Waegli house hypothesized based on 1895 plat map (Roonie and Schleiss 1895).

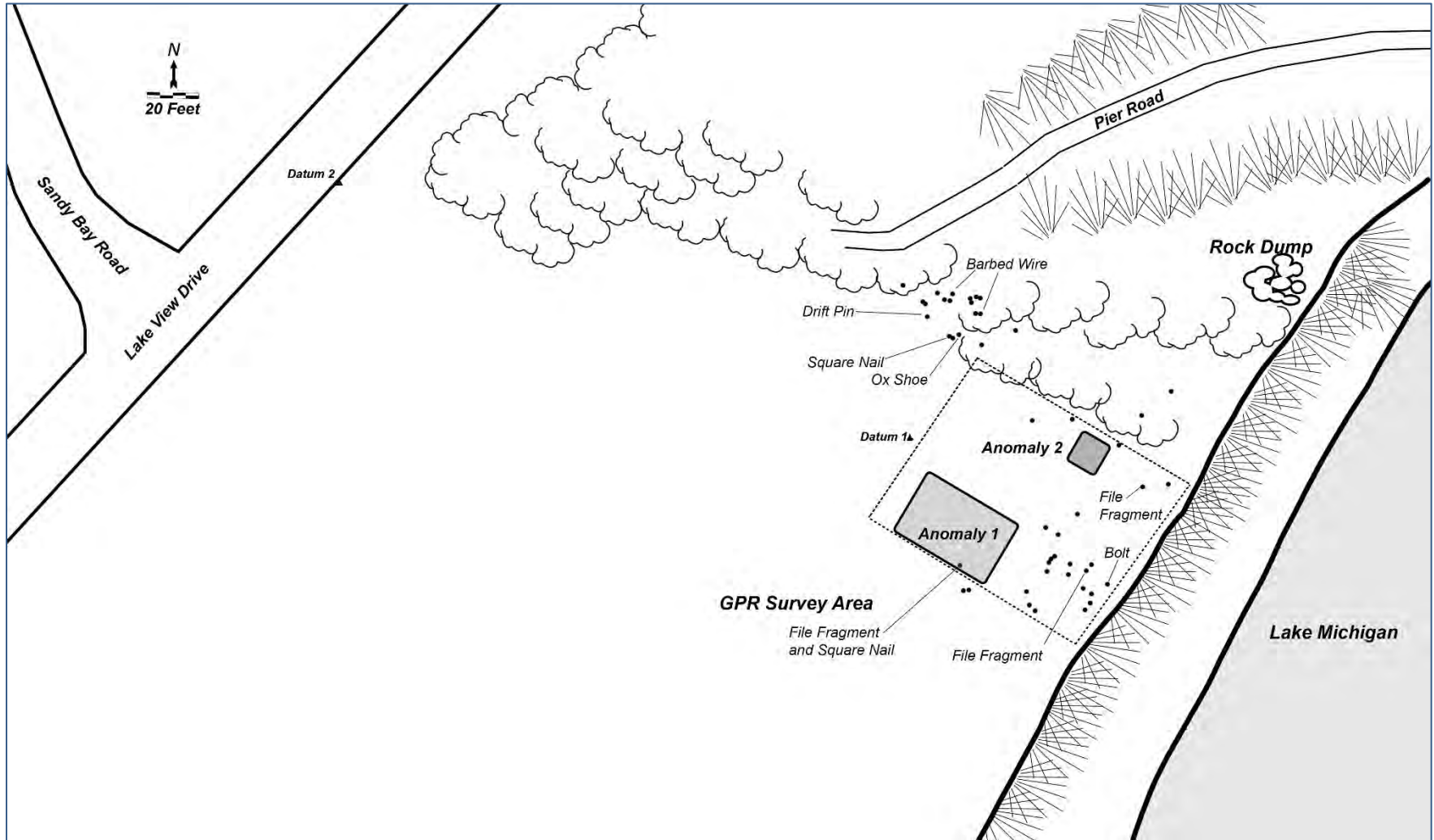


Figure 96: Detail of southern survey area at Sandy Bay complex. Dots mark metal-detector hits. GPR anomalies appear at 0.75 meter depth (approximately 2.5 feet). Nature of anomalies is unknown; no clear signs of structures were noted. See Appendix A.



concentration to gauge the age of the materials within it. The first test yielded another blade fragment from a large and heavily worn woodworking file and a bent, machine-cut rectangular nail (Figure 97). The second produced the tang of a third large woodworking file. The third test contained a curved, unidentified cast-iron metal object, meant to fasten onto a larger metal or wooden item.

Concentration 2 is located along the ravine margin, and falls mainly outside of the GPR grid, though portions overlap with the grid's northwestern corner. This concentration includes the findspots of the ox shoe and probable drift pin. One additional test was opened in this concentration to provide parity with Concentration 2. It produced a single machine-cut nail with a rectangular cross section.

### *2023 Investigations: Metal Detector and Walkover North of Fish Creek*

Following the successful confirmation of 19<sup>th</sup> century structural and pier-complex deposits on the south side of Fish Creek, the LLPCP team moved into a fallow cultivated field on the north side of the creek. Soil visibility ranged between 10–15%, insufficient for adequate walkover survey. Tractor ruts and other areas of exposed soil in the southern third of the field were examined, with negative results. During walkover, Dr. Joyce noted the presence of a somewhat squared level area in the field in line with a culvert crossing/field road entrance. No structures appear at this location in the 1938 aerial photo of the site, and none appear in more recent aerial imagery. The faint level area is, however, in the approximate position of a structure identified as the Sandy Bay store on the 1876 plat map and as the Sandy Bay cheese factory on the 1895 plat map (J. Knauber & Co. 1876; Rooney & Schleis 1895). Comparison between the 1938 and modern aerial photos indicates that the course of Lakeview Drive has shifted eastward, bringing the road closer to the structure's location (USDA 1938).

A second metal detector survey was initiated centering on the possible structural remnant, resulting in the identification of a broad scatter of metal surrounding the feature (Figure 98). The limits of the scatter were not defined, as the field has been subjected to long cultivation and it quickly became apparent that the scatter likely covers most, if not all, of the southern portion of the field. As no clear concentrations were present, the metal detector hits were not mapped in. Four hit locations around the level feature were opened in small shovel tests to judge the age of the materials. The first test yielded a small fragment of a machine-cut nail with a rectangular cross section. The second test produced a bent nail, corroded to the point that it could not be determined whether it was machine cut or wire. The third produced half of a round, cast-iron pipe fitting. The fourth yielded a small, flat ferrous metal fragment of unknown age or function (Figure 99). The items found suggest the presence of a 19<sup>th</sup> century structure associated with the Sandy Bay pier complex, possibly the store and/or later cheese factory.

As in 2022, none of the items exposed during testing were collected. Instead, they were photographed with a ruler for scale, then reburied *in situ* at the request of the landowner.

Sandy Bay Pier is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



Figure 97: Metal objects identified during the 2022 and 2023 metal detector surveys in the McNally complex area south of Fish Creek: a-c., fragments of large woodworking files; d. probable drift pin; e-f. cut nails; g. large bolt; h. unidentified machinery part; i. ox shoe.



Figure 98: Survey area in Pfister & Vogel complex area. Yellow and blue flags mark metal detector hits. Photo taken looking south towards Fish Creek bridge.



Figure 99: Metal objects identified during the 2023 metal detector survey in the Pfister & Vogel complex area north of Fish Creek: a. fragment of metal fitting; b-c. cut nails; d. unidentified metal fragment.

## 2022 Investigations: Wreck of the Tug Thomas Spear

The wreckage of the *Thomas Spear* is located at N 44° 21.425', W 087°31.751', 7.2 miles southwest of Kewaunee, Wisconsin. The shipwreck rests on a 40-degree tilt. Only a small portion of ship's floor up to the first futtock, and the engine mount was exposed from the surrounding sand at the time of the survey (Figure 100). A great deal more of the vessel's hull is preserved beneath the lakebed observed during visits to the wreck site on several consecutive years prior to the survey. The wreckage lies on a 312° angle toward the shore. Several pieces of the ship's ceiling planking were exposed and consistently measure 0.6 feet wide by 0.3 feet thick. A single piece of outer hull planking was exposed and measures 0.5 feet wide by 0.3 feet thick. During the survey nine frame sets were visible above the sand. Individual frames measure 0.35 feet wide by 0.8 feet deep with futtock room accounting for 0.7 feet. Frame sets were evenly spaced at 1.0 feet. Three timber chocks fill in the spacing between frames alongside the exposed engine mount. The timber chocks measure 1.0 feet wide by 0.8 feet thick. A portion of the engine mounting bracket was visible. It consists of both wooden and metal components that make up its base. Four threaded bolts remain atop the frame that would have received the engine feet, although the nuts (nuts were not extant) were removed during the salvage. Alongside the engine frame remains a single broken metal knee. This would have added strength to the ship's hull next to the heavy machinery. Extant wreckage shows evidence of burning which is consistent with the story of *Thomas Spear's* loss.

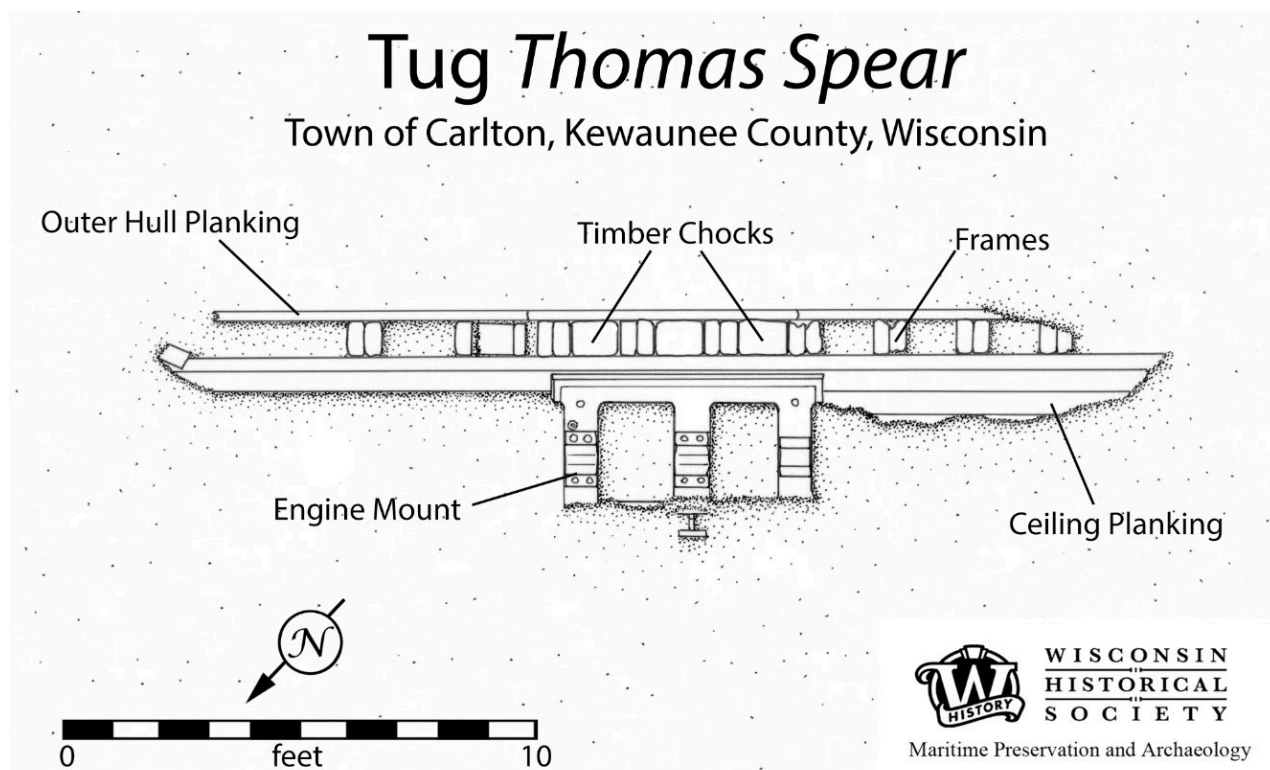


Figure 100: Plan map of the exposed remains of the tug *Thomas Spear*, north of the Sandy Bay pier.



## Chapter Ten

### Profit and Partnerships: Alaska Pier

Pull up a map of Kewaunee County and look along the highway between Kewaunee and Algoma (formerly Ahnapee) and you will see the small, unincorporated community of Alaska nestled by two inland lakes. The tiny village, home to the Pierce Town Hall, is located about a mile from the lakeshore. Highway 42 swerves towards it and away from Lake Michigan, so that drivers lose sight of the level horizon of the lake for a time. Even Lakeshore Road turns to point due northward, leaving the lakeshore behind. The roadmap betrays Alaska's history. Alaska was once elsewhere. Alaska was once a lake port. Like the road, it turned inland.

The stretch of lake bluff where Alaska originally stood has an air of isolation (Figure 101). The shore is covered in rounded black and white cobbles that twist and chatter underfoot. The bluffs are steep and draped with a tangle of falling trees undermined by the waves. A small and tannin-dyed creek flows into the lake, staining the cobbles brown. In late summer, the stream is barely a trickle, water wending through the drifts of stone to find Lake Michigan. It comes from a heavily forested ravine, flanked on either side by large farm fields. There are no summer homes on the lake bluffs above, no farmhouses, no silos. Just crops, trees, and the sound of the wind.

Each of the piers of Kewaunee County has a unique story. The story of Dean's Pier is a story of innovation and success. Grimm's Pier tells a tale of hardship and knowing when to quit. Sandy Bay testifies to the reach of the southern cities. The saga of Sprague's Pier is threaded through with lawsuits and reinventions. Silver Creek is a conundrum. Alaska Pier's story is a story of men who came from humble beginnings and rose to power on Wisconsin's rocky shores.



*Figure 101: Shoreline at Alaska pier, looking south from mouth of small creek.*



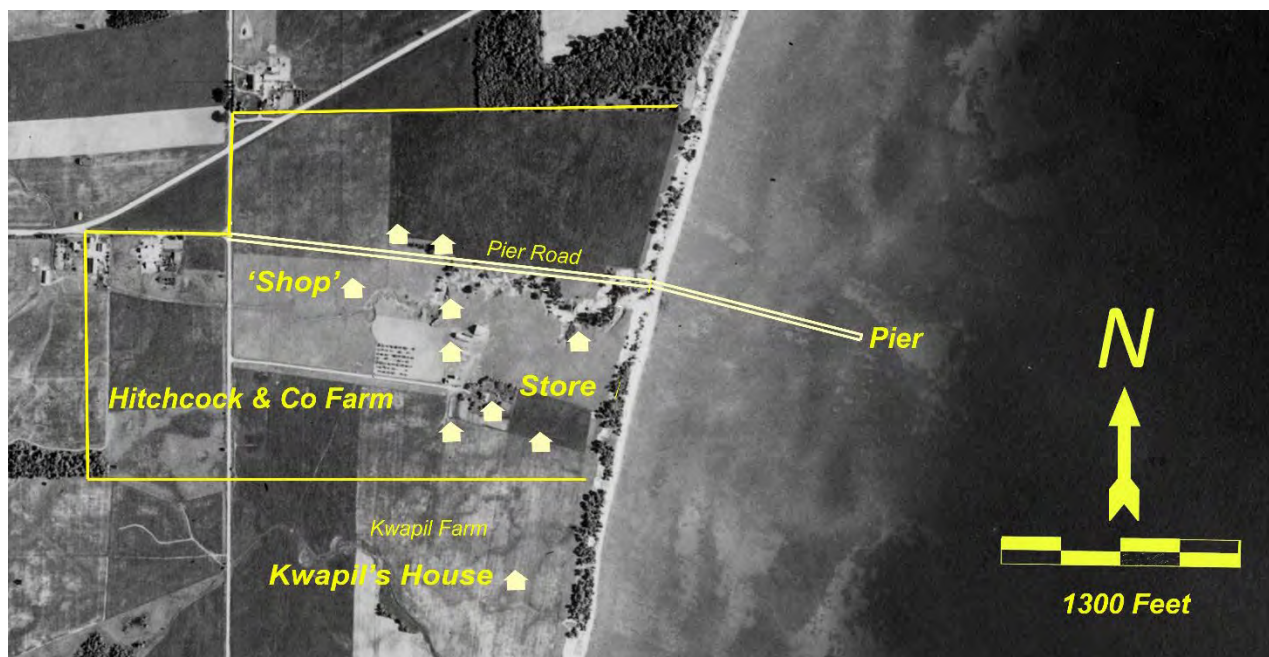


Figure 102: General layout of Alaska pier complex. Precise location of store undetermined.

## Beginnings

Alaska Pier (Figure 102) was built in 1867, a year when the sounds of steam pile drivers echoed up and down the shores of Pierce Township. Within sight, to the south, Henry Grimm was building his own ill-starred pier. To the north lay the growing port community of Ahnapee. Alaska was the brainchild of a triumvirate of local business leaders: William D. Hitchcock, Walter S. Johnson, and Vojta Mashek. The men came from different backgrounds, but found their fortunes linked in Kewaunee County.

W. D. Hitchcock knew about piers, shipping, the mercantile business, and the Great Lakes trade. He was co-owner of a pier in Kewaunee itself and had run a successful mercantile and lumber business in the city for years. Hitchcock was another New York transplant, part of the Yankee wave of immigration to Manitowoc County. He was born circa 1836 and was yet a young man when he came to Wisconsin. In 1860 he partnered with another merchant to create the firm Goodenow & Hitchcock and opened a grocery store and lumber dealership (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1860h). Shortly afterwards he married a woman named Frank Johnson (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1860l). Hitchcock's early business in Kewaunee followed the same model used at Dean's Pier, Sandy Bay, and other private pier complexes, with the added benefits of a port city location. His store stocked general goods such as clothing, agricultural implements, etc., which were sold for cash or exchanged for forest and agricultural products that were shipped to Chicago from his pier on the waterfront. By 1864, Goodenow & Hitchcock were one of the leading shippers in Kewaunee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1864e).



*Figure 103: Vojta Mashek, from Illustrated Redlands 1897:47.*

For a time in the 1860s William and Frank Hitchcock resided in Manitowoc, where they lived a life of ease with a modest (but locally notable) annual income of \$30,591 in modern currency (*Semi-Weekly Wisconsin* 1867b). In 1867, Hitchcock bought out Goodenow and took sole ownership of the store and pier. The couple returned to Kewaunee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867c). Hitchcock bought another commercial building just off Kewaunee’s main street and pooled his resources with brother-in-law Walter S. Johnson to buy out competitor W. S. Finley (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1907a). Within a year, a reporter for the Manitowoc newspaper, seeing their holdings, dubbed them “merchant princes” of Kewaunee (*Manitowoc Tribune* 1868).

According to local lore, Vojta Mashek (Figure 103), the third member of the trio, arrived in Wisconsin in company with another kind of prince—a Russian one. As the story went, Mashek was of Bohemian stock, descendant of a deeply-rooted family in Pohorovic. He was sent to Prague to obtain an education, and ascended to become private secretary to Count Malinowski, a member of the Russian Imperial Emigration Commission. In 1861,

as Bohemian immigrants flooded into Wisconsin, Malinowski and Mashek came west on a fact-finding mission. Russia was interested in founding colonies of its own in the forests of northeastern Asia, and hoped to explore not only how similar settlements operated in the United States but whether any Slavic Bohemians experienced in settler life were willing to emigrate back to the Old World. While the Prince and Mashek toured, however, the project lost support and was abandoned. Prince Malinowski returned to Europe. Mashek, charmed by the Great Lakes, remained behind in Racine (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1907b). There is sadly little historical evidence to support this fantastic tale, beyond Mashek’s presence in Wisconsin.

What is known is that Mashek was a man of sharp mind and literary tastes, who “moved in a higher intellectual atmosphere” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1907b). He founded *The Slavic*, a Bohemian newspaper, in Racine and settled in amongst the Bohemian community. While in Racine, Mashek came to know Anna Kwapil. Anna was also Bohemian. She, brother Frank, and sister Mary immigrated to Wisconsin with their parents in 1855 when Anna was 19. Their father died only a year after their arrival. Frank, the eldest and only son, struggled to support the family. An apprenticeship as a stonecutter was cut short by illness, but he managed to learn the cigar-making trade and set up a small but successful cigar factory. When the Civil War broke out, he shut the factory down and volunteered for military service, joining Company D of the 26<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry.

In his absence, Vojta and Anna took to each other, and the couple married in 1863. Shortly afterwards, the newlyweds picked up stakes and moved northward to Kewaunee, where Vojta leased, and later purchased outright, the Wisconsin House hotel (*Algoma Record* 1917; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1863b, 1864b). The newlyweds celebrated, unaware that Frank lay in a hospital in Washington, D.C., recovering from wounds suffered in battle.

The 26th Wisconsin Infantry, composed mainly of German immigrants, saw brutal service. Their casualty rate was one of the highest in the Union forces. Kwapil mustered in at Camp Sigel in Milwaukee in August of 1862, and fought with the regiment at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. Neither battle went well for the Union side. At Chancellorsville, rebel forces overwhelmed the Union flanks, pushing them into the 26<sup>th</sup>'s position on undefendable ground. The 26<sup>th</sup> retreated, and in the maelstrom Kwapil was wounded. His recovery took months, and while he was not wounded severely enough to be discharged, he was not fit for full service either. In March of 1864, Kwapil was transferred to the Veteran Reserve Corps, among other wounded soldiers capable of light duty (*Algoma Record* 1917).

That year, just over a year after Anna and her husband arrived in Kewaunee, Mashek partnered with fellow Bohemian Wojta Stransky and bought a store formerly belonging to W. S. Finley (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1864i; Wing 1921–1922:63). The new firm set themselves up as merchants, carrying a line of general goods. Kwapil joined them in Kewaunee after he mustered out at the end of the war. He tried yet another line of work, opening a photography studio in Mashek's store. Sadly, business was anything but brisk. The enterprise didn't pay, and he headed back to Racine for a time before returning to Kewaunee and taking a job with Mashek as a clerk (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1865c, 1866d; *Algoma Record* 1917).

Mashek's fortunes were still rising. After taking sole ownership of the general store, Mashek partnered with Edward Seyk in 1867, expanding into the grain and produce trade (Wing 1921–1922:100). In September of 1867, Hitchcock, Johnson, and Mashek joined forces. The new firm took the name W. D. Hitchcock & Co and consolidated in Mashek's establishment. Together, the merchant princes of Kewaunee controlled a large proportion of Kewaunee's mercantile and grain trade, as well as the city's North Pier, where the Goodrich steamers landed. It was against this backdrop that the idea of Alaska Pier was conceived (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1867i, 1907a). Mashek, realizing that the pier would need a manager, tapped Frank Kwapil for the job.

### ***North to Alaska: Hitchcock & Co. 1867–1870***

Historian George Wing referred to 1868, the year that the Alaska pier was completed, as “the Squirrel Year”. Wildfires had burned through the forests, and squirrels of all colors—red, black, and grey—swarmed over the county. “. . .it was a poor hunter, indeed, that could not bag a dozen or two in an afternoon's hunt,” Wing said (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1977). By late May 1868, the growing pier was almost 800 feet long and nearly complete (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868g). The first cargo of posts bound for Chicago was loaded onto the schooner *Elbe* in late June, followed by a load of tanning bark for Milwaukee via the schooner *Liberty* (*Algoma Record* 1916b). Frank found himself responsible for the pier's operations, and those of the Alaska People's Store, the complex's general store (Johnson 2021:44; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869b). The name was derived from the recently built Alaska House, located about a mile inland along the main road, in turn named to commemorate the recent purchase of the Alaska Territory (though local lore had it that the name was chosen because the location was blisteringly cold) (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1970).

While Wojta and Anna Mashek gloated, and Kwapil scrambled, Johnson kept his head down as an unassuming lumberman and Hitchcock had politics on his mind. Hitchcock had long been a player in the local Democratic party. He held a position as a clerk of the circuit court for a time in

Kewaunee County, then became a County Supervisor, overseeing Kewaunee, Franklin, and Carlton townships (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1863c). His upward progress was blocked by competing merchant and lumberman Edward Decker, who held the office of County Clerk. Decker owned the *Kewaunee Enterprise* and stacked local offices with his friends and clients. Upon returning to Kewaunee, Hitchcock set out to wrest control from him. He called a mass convention in Ahnapee in 1868 and oversaw nomination of the independent ticket that finally toppled Decker's regime. Hitchcock was elected County Clerk in Decker's place (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1907a).

Meanwhile, north of town at Alaska Pier, Kwapil—the “wide-awake resident partner”—was, like Fred Bach down in Carlton, living in the store (Figure 104). He was also “up to his eyes in business” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869b, 1870c). The lumber boom was on and the pier did a bountiful trade. The partners decided that the pier was inadequate for the demands placed on it. They contracted with E. W. Packard, a builder in Manitowoc, and lengthened it out to a total extent of 1,010 feet and a width of 44 feet in time for the 1869 shipping season (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869c, 1869g, 1870c).

Shipping was uneventful at first, or at least nothing caught the attention of the press in Kewaunee or Algoma. That changed in early August when Frank Sikula—a newly-arrived 20-year-old Bohemian immigrant employed at Alaska—joined a group of workers staging a load of bark on the pier. The work gang tried to move a wagon full of bark but it struck one of the pier pilings and jolted. Sinkula was knocked into the heaving lake and vanished. Despite a strenuous search, the body of the “intelligent, promising young man” wasn't found for days (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869n, 1869o, 1869p).

One month later, another incident led to yet another plunge into the lake, and another appearance in the newspaper. This one, however, had a happier ending. One member of a team of harnessed horses waiting on the pier took its frustrations out on its partner by biting it. The bitten horse understandably tried to bolt and promptly fell off the pier. However, it was still part of a harnessed team and its partner “had no inclination to follow his companion.” Workers turned towards the commotion only to see one startled horse dangling in mid-air and the other hanging onto the pier “like grim death”. Someone rushed up and cut the harness, and the bitten horse “dropped quietly into the lake and swam ashore all right” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869q).

Despite the year's tragedies and comedies, the pier did remarkable business in 1869. No fewer than 50 cargoes were loaded onto vessels during the 1869 season—including 27,000 railroad ties, over 50,000 cedar posts, 1,000-plus cords of wood, and more than 1,200 cords of bark (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869w). The 1870 season promised more of the same and by late February, the pier yards were filling up. As for the store, Kwapil had more space to play with. He finished building his own home, a small, two-story gabled-ell, next to the store, and transformed his former living quarters into a storeroom (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870c). There wasn't much to fill the new space with. The store shelves were emptier than Kwapil would have liked, even knowing that the other lake merchants were facing similar issues.

The shelves were empty because the lake ice had, as was to be expected given the season, shut down navigation. No new supplies were forthcoming, and the shelves couldn't be restocked. The ice only grew thicker as spring approached. Kwapil must have looked out at the lake every day,

wishing for the ice to hurry up and open. When it did, however, it did so with a chorus of groans and splintering crashes. The ice pulled free from shore, and drifted eastward, taking parts of the pier along for the ride. Two bents were demolished and seven ‘guard piles’ designed to keep objects from striking the pier were pulled out of the lakebed. The rest of the pier “received a severe wrenching” that cost handsomely to repair (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870d).

### ***Battle of the Brothers-in-Law: Johnson & Kwapil, 1870***

The pier was not the only thing that disintegrated early in 1870. The firm of Hitchcock & Co. split in two. Mashek and Hitchcock were still on wonderful terms with each other, but their heart lay in Kewaunee. Hitchcock had his political career to look after as well. Besides, Kwapil was proving an able manager, and showed he was capable of handling affairs on his own. Walter Johnson stayed on with Kwapil as the senior partner in a new Alaska-based firm of Johnson & Kwapil. The two sets of relatives found themselves in the role of competitors—a financial battle of brothers-in-law (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870d). Alaska Pier acquitted itself well. Johnson & Kwapil shipped over 37,000 railroad ties, nearly 40,000 cedar posts (round and split), over 1,800 cords of wood, just over 1,000 cords of bark, and 500 telegraph poles that season, divided into 55 separate cargoes (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871a). Johnson and Kwapil did good business, and their reputations rose as the season went on. The pair were described as “enterprising, public-spirited young men, who take an interest in the welfare of their neighborhood, as well as in their own advancement” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870f).

The contest between the in-laws, however, was exceedingly brief. Johnson had been thinking very hard about his own advancement, as it turned out. He bought interest in the Milwaukee Hide & Leather Company, sold his share in Johnson & Kwapil back to Hitchcock & Mashek, and moved his family to Milwaukee to take a position as the leather company’s secretary. The firms merged back again and reincorporated as Hitchcock, Mashek, & Kwapil (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870l).

### ***Thriving Little Village: Hitchcock, Mashek & Kwapil, 1870–1879***

The 1871 season began poorly, and only got worse. Haulers had trouble getting to the pier due to bad road conditions, and by late March the firm had banked less than they could have (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871e). Vessels started loading in April and arrived in force. Three were seen loading simultaneously on one day. A correspondent from the *Enterprise* visited and found Kwapil manning a store “full of business.” The *Enterprise* predicted that Alaska’s future as a “thriving little village” was bright (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871g). Kwapil sent shipments of timber products south to the cities. Some of the cargoes reached familiar hands. During a trip to Milwaukee, an *Enterprise* correspondent noted the schooner *Ashtabula*, loaded with bark, sitting at the dock belonging to the Milwaukee Hide & Leather Company where Walter Johnson had settled in (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871i).

As summer wore on, the drought of 1871 set in. By late September, conditions at Alaska were as bad as they were anywhere. When the Great Fire blew up and tore across northern Kewaunee County, Alaska was in its direct path. The workers and residents fought back with all they had. The pier’s wealthy patrons employed a large workforce, and that worked in Alaska’s favor. Kwapil and the men threw themselves into what correspondents later called “the hardest effectual fight



against the fire” in Kewaunee County. They fought to save their families and their homes and their livelihoods. With “almost superhuman exertions,” they saved Alaska. The scow *Alaska* was tied up alongside the pier, loading timber, when the firestorm arrived. Cinders rained down and the pier caught fire. The *Alaska* cast off and pulled away, her cargo incomplete; the only means of escape by lake went with her. Men rushed onto the smoke-shrouded pier amongst blazing piles of stockpiled timber, silhouetted by the glow of the fire and reflections of the flames in the dark waters of the lake, and put the fire out. The pier caught fire again...and again...and again (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q).

In the end, Hitchcock, Mashek & Kwapil lost some \$500 (around \$12,400 in modern currency). No homes burned in Alaska, and no lives were lost. The blacksmith shop was the only building the workers were unable to save. Other losses included 3,000 posts and “some wood and ties”. The firm had no insurance. Burned-out families and refugees from less fortunate regions congregated at the pier, carrying what they had been able to save. They awaited evacuation and sought comfort in each other’s company (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q).

Afterwards, relief funds poured in and life returned slowly to normal. Loggers rushed into the woods to salvage charred timber. By June 25, 1872, nineteen cargoes were shipped south and the season was still in its early stages (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872g). That year marked the last for Hitchcock in Kewaunee County. Like the owners of Carlton Pier, he headed south to semi-retirement in Evanston, Illinois, leaving “none but friends and well-wishers” behind (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872m). There, he opened his own commission office and continued in the lumber trade, keeping his share in the company as a long-distance partner (*Ahnapee Record* 1877b)

Spring brought more ice, and more damage. Piers all along Kewaunee County’s shore were “shaken and chafed” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873f). Kwapil quickly arranged for repairs and started making preparations for the coming season’s trade. Hitchcock & Mashek had big ideas. That year they bought two ships—the schooners *H. Rand* and *Beloit*. Between them, the schooners could carry over 200,000 feet of lumber per trip (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873i, 1873m). The *Beloit* appears in Chicago newspaper records dropping off cordwood by late September (*Chicago Evening Post* 1873). In October, the pier was under renovation again (*Ahnapee Record* 1873d). The year ended with the village “lively and flourishing.” 1873’s shipping was brisk and Alaska People’s Store was fully stocked and busy with shoppers (*Ahnapee Record* 1873f).

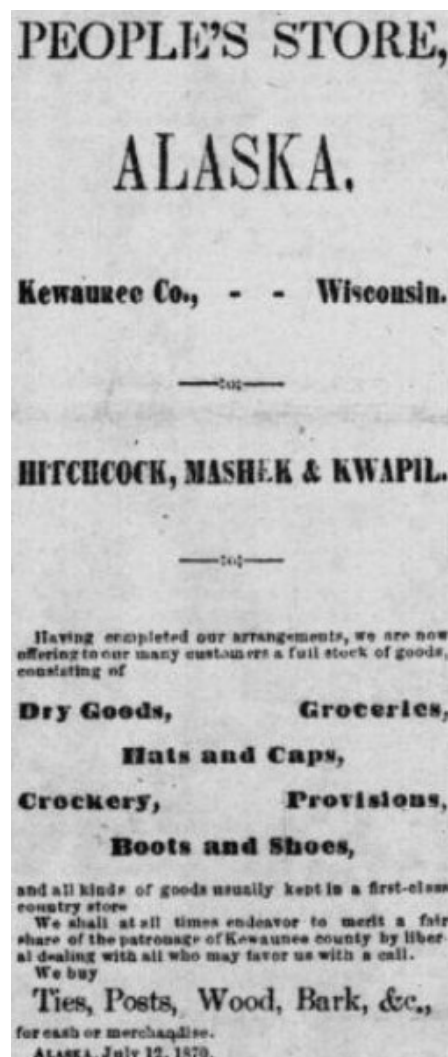


Figure 104: Advertisement for the Alaska People’s Store, *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872e.

1874 opened with the news that a telegraph station was to be installed in the Alaska People's Store, run by Kwapil himself (*Ahnapee Record* 1874a). The pier complex was busy again, with cord wood the main product being stockpiled (*Ahnapee Record* 1874b). Wenzel Urbanek was brought on as clerk and remained with the store until it closed (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1933a). Mentions of the pier are sparse through this period, busy as it was. It seems to have been slightly too far from Kewaunee and had no correspondent of its own. The *Ahnapee* papers were mainly interested in which ships were coming and going, and then only infrequently. The schooner *Grant* called at the pier in late April and mid-May, suggesting that the vessel's owners had a contract with Alaska that season. The schooner *Gazelle* loaded as well, and Captain Jere Minsky fell during the bustle of loading and dislocated his shoulder (*Ahnapee Record* 1875h, 1875j).

The 1876 plat map of Kewaunee County captures a substantial community (Figure 105). Far more buildings are shown at Alaska than any of the other pier complexes. The complex itself is listed under the ownership of Hitchcock and Kwapil. A service road runs directly from the pier to Lakeshore Road, angling slightly west-northwest, through a complex of nine associated buildings. One building is identified as a 'shop,' another as the store, and the map notes the presence of the telegraph office. Two buildings are north of the service road, and the others (including the shop and store) are on the south. The properties immediately around the complex are owned by Hitchcock & Co., while the property bordering the pier complex to the south is owned directly by Kwapil.

A mile and a half due west, just south of Little Lake, lay Alaska's future. In 1876, the only hint of the Alaska to come was a hotel and saloon at the intersection of future Highway 42 and County Highway D. The tavern area quickly gained the name "Alaska Corners" and emerged as the leading local social center. Along the shore, life went on as usual. 1876 saw the *H. Rand* and *Beloit* making stops at the pier. The pier was damaged again in a late season storm, and Frank Kwapil was very, very busy (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876l, 1876m).



Figure 105: 1876 plat map of Kewaunee County, showing Alaska Pier and Alaska Corners (the saloon and hotel south of Little Lake (J. Knauber & Co. 1876).

Just over a mile and a half northwards, another pier stretched out into the lake. The Langworthy Pier, built in the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1871, was used to ship lumber and wood products produced by the small, inland mill town of Casco. It was owned by Edward Decker and C. B. Fay and had its own store. Kwapil rented Langworthy's pier and the store and took over business at both locations. "Frank will have his hands full," said the *Enterprise*, "but he is equal to the undertaking" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876r).

As 1877 dawned, the *Green Bay Advocate* gave an accounting of the community's history, written (or so the people at the *Kewaunee Enterprise* suspected) by John Whitaker. Over the course of the nine years that the pier operated so far, it shipped nearly 270,000 railroad ties, over 434,000 posts, nearly 3,200 telegraph poles, over 10,000 cords of wood, and just over 8,000 cords of bark, divided amongst 360 cargoes. Whitaker (if he was the author) reported that the farmers and loggers were paid over \$120,000 for the timber goods brought in—equivalent to nearly \$3.5 million dollars today. The men who loaded the vessels were paid \$6,500 in wages in the same period (equivalent to \$183,400). The accounting ended with a prediction that if the shipping continued at a similar rate, the local timber would last another ten years (*Ahnapee Record* 1877b).

The pier continued to do good business, shipping considerable amounts of cord wood. Schooners such as the *B. F. Wade*, *Ardent*, and *Roeder* came and went carrying cord wood and railroad ties. Farmers hauled wood and other goods pier-ward, observed by onlookers in the growing community at Alaska Corners (*Ahnapee Record* 1877e, 1877m, 1879f; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878c). In 1878, local business leaders—including Kwapil and C. B. Fay—pooled their resources to build a cheese factory. It was not built at either Alaska Pier or Langworthy, but inland at Alaska Corners. The turn away from the lake had begun (*Ahnapee Record* 1878e).

During Kwapil's tenure as 1/3-owner of the company, his reputation for good service, fair dealing, and smart business sense had only grown. The former stonecutter/cigar maker/photographer who once struggled to support a fatherless family of newly arrived immigrants was now on a social par with the other wealthy men in the county. It was time for him to take the next step upwards. He bought an entire block in Ahnapee and made plans to put up a large brick store on par with the Mashek and Hitchcock stores in Kewaunee. He built a fine house, one of the "neatest arranged" in the city. In late November, Kwapil and his family moved out of Alaska Pier and into Ahnapee (*Ahnapee Record* 1879f). Shortly afterwards, Hitchcock formally retired and the firm dissolved.

### ***Turning Away: Shimmel, Janda, & Kwapil, 1879–1880***

Kwapil brought in merchants Frank Shimmel and Joseph H. Janda as his new partners. Alaska Pier was the least of their priorities. Together, they owned three stores among them—the Alaska People's Store, Kwapil's new store in Algoma, and a store in Forestville, six miles northwest of Ahnapee over the Door County line (*Ahnapee Record* 1879h). Life seems to have passed along quietly at Alaska Pier afterwards until April of 1880.

The schooner *Annie Thorine* (Figure 106) arrived at the pier in early April, and workmen set about loading a cargo of railroad ties. When the ties were aboard, she cast off, drifted out, and promptly

Historical Collections of the Great Lakes  
Bowling Green State University



*Figure 106: The Annie Thorine, from Historical Collections of the Great Lakes, Bowling Green State University.*

*Milwaukee News* 1880). The incident did not stop other vessels from calling at the pier. The schooners *B. F. Wade*, *Belle Laurie*, and *J. M. Tracy* picked up cargoes for the company that season, loading ties and tanning bark (*Ahnapee Record* 1880j, 1880l, 1880m; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880i).

### ***The End and Afterwards***

The 1880 season was Alaska's last. The Alaska People's Store closed. A new postmaster, Henry Terens, moved the post office to the Alaska House at Alaska Corners (*Ahnapee Record* 1880u, 1880w). The company of Shimmel, Janda, & Kwapil dissolved as Shimmel pulled out of the firm, and Janda & Kwapil focused their attention on Ahnapee and on Kwapil's rising political career. The following spring, in 1881, Frank Kwapil was elected mayor of Ahnapee (*Ahnapee Record* 1881h). Mayor Frank Kwapil went on to become Judge Kwapil and was admitted to the State bar in 1899—the oldest successful applicant in Wisconsin at the time (*Manitowoc Pilot* 1899). He died in 1903 of the effects of diabetes (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1903b).

struck a hidden boulder. The blow stove in planks on her hull and the *Annie Thorine* filled with water and settled down onto the lake bottom eight feet below. The waves rose, she pounded on the bottom, and the ties on her deck washed overboard. The next several weeks saw busy activity around the pier as various parties tried to free the schooner. The first step, throwing the rest of the cargo of ties back into the lake to wash ashore on the beach, didn't work. The tug *B. B. Coe* was telegraphed for. It tried to pull the schooner free, but the lake was too calm and the vessel refused to budge without the added buoyancy that lake swells provided. The tug gave her crew a lift back to Milwaukee instead.

The *B. B. Coe* returned to Ahnapee in late May for another try, but another month passed before the vessel finally was pulled free. The tug towed her first to Manitowoc for quick repairs, then back to port in Milwaukee (*Ahnapee Record* 1880f, 1880g, 1880h, 1880j, 1880m; *Daily*



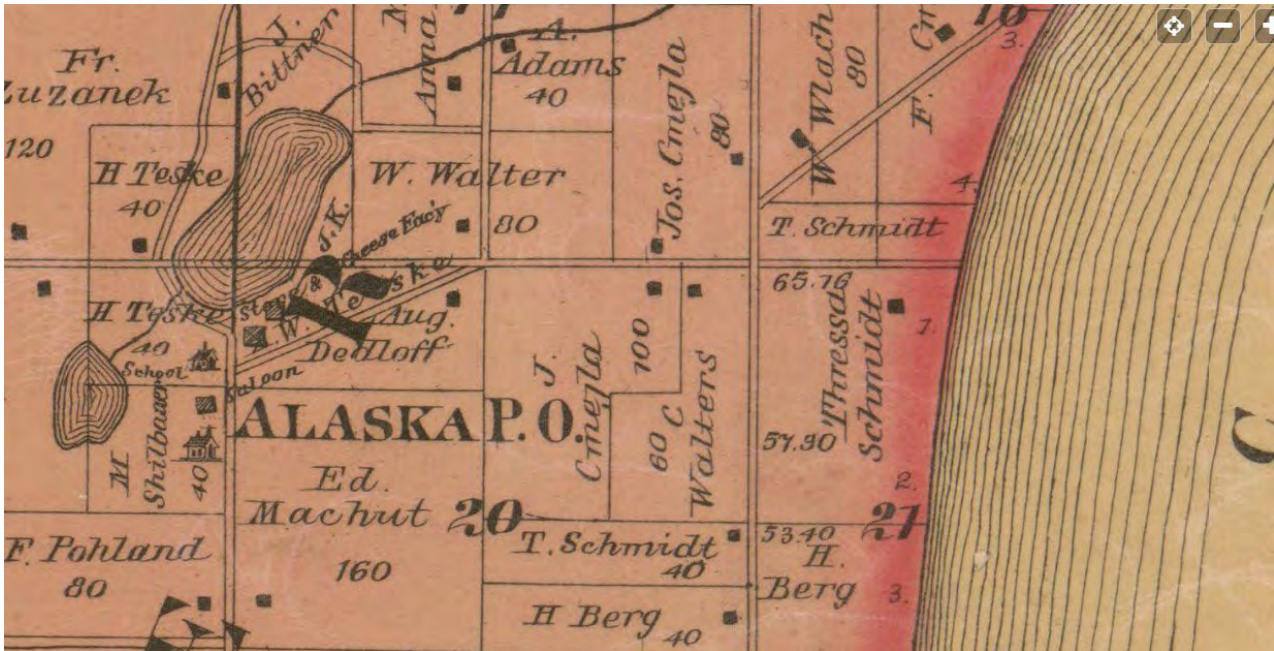


Figure 107: The 1895 plat map of Kewaunee County (Roonie and Schleis 1895).

W. D. Hitchcock, the man who started it all, had a tumultuous retirement. While in Evanston he invested heavily in mining. It did not go well. He lost nearly everything. He found a place in Point DeTour, Michigan and started over. He died there in late December 1906 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1907).

Vojta Mashek died just a few weeks afterwards, leaving “a life of usefulness” behind him. In 1883, when Kewaunee formally incorporated into a city, he was elected Kewaunee’s first mayor, and the two leading cities of Kewaunee County found themselves headed by a pair of brothers-in-law. Anna Kwopil Mashek must have been beside herself. Mayor Mashek branched out into the lumber trade in Wisconsin and Michigan, financed sawmills in the pineries of the Door Peninsula, entered the shipping and ship refurbishing business, and founded the Bank of Kewaunee. After his retirement in 1889, he traveled the world (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1907b).

Walter S. Johnson continued his work at the Milwaukee Leather & Hide Company for a time and stayed in Milwaukee for many years. He eventually gravitated towards shipping and his holdings came to include several Great Lakes schooners, including the *L. W. Perry* (sold to W. D. Hitchcock in 1888), the *Annie O. Hanson*, and the *Morning Star* (*Racine Journal Times* 1888).

As for Alaska Pier, it was gone. The 1895 plat map shows no pier and no village (Roonie and Schleis 1895) (Figure 107). A single structure, possibly used as a farmhouse, remained. Inland, just south of Little Lake, Alaska Corners had dropped the last half of its name. The little village boasted a hotel, saloon, schoolhouse, store, and cheese factory. The pier, meanwhile, slowly rotted away. It vanished below Lake Michigan’s surface in the 1940s (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1970).



## ***Alaska Pier Today***

The remains of the Alaska pier lie on a heading of 100-degrees and extend 810 feet from shore (Figures 108 and 109). It measures 35 feet wide overall and consists of at least 18 remaining pilings located in five to ten feet of water (Figures 110 and 111). The pilings are only visible extending from 673 feet to 810 feet from shore. It is likely that the lower extents of more pilings exist, but they are covered by sand and rocks. The 18 pilings all measure approximately one foot in diameter. The spacing between the remaining pilings is inconsistent and is likely due to there being multiple pilings missing.

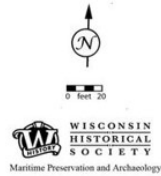
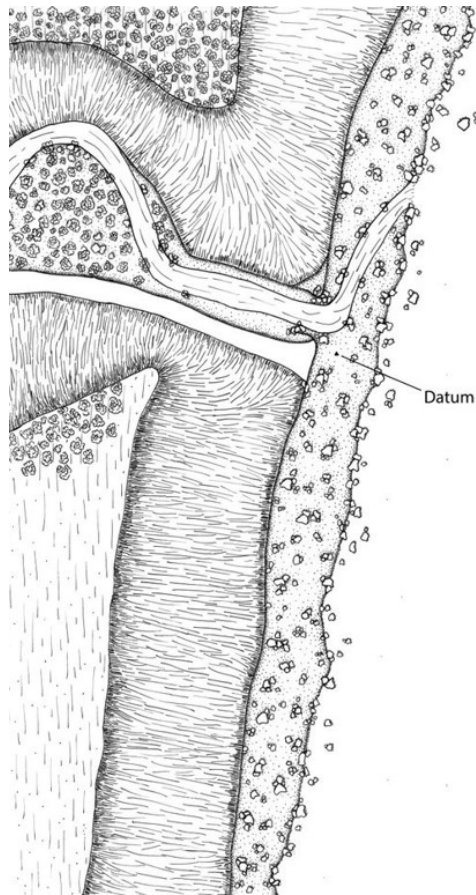
The pier was supported by two parallel rows of large diameter pilings, and one row of double pilings, spaced close together and running along the pier's centerline, extending from shore. At the furthest outbound end of the pier remains, two clusters of three pilings are located at the end of the northern row of pilings. While it is possible that this was the extent of the pier, historic documents indicate that the pier would have continued out further from shore. It is likely that these additional supports were included to increase stability of the pier so it could hold additional weight.

Near the end of the remaining pilings, there is what appears to be a long mound of small rocks, running perpendicular to the pier, and parallel to shore. These rocks are much smaller than the large rocks found closer to shore. At first it was thought that this could be the remains of another pier base, added later for additional room for vessels; however, there were no wooden timbers located near this rock mound, and no historic evidence to suggest Alaska Pier had this modification. Additionally, satellite images of the surrounding area indicate that these "mounds" of rocks running parallel to shore are common in the area and are likely a natural part of the lakebed.

No associated artifacts were located during the site survey although visibility at the site was clear. Additionally, landward, no evidence of the pier's access road was located during the survey. Additional investigations of the shoreline may reveal additional artifacts and structures in the future.

# Alaska Pier KE-121

Kewaunee County, Wisconsin



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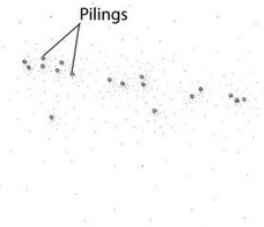
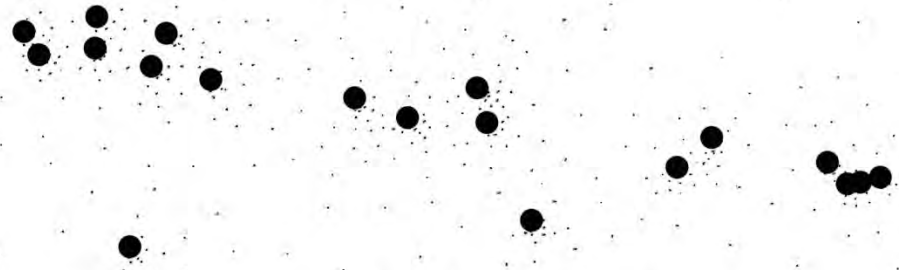


Figure 108: Map of remnants of Alaska Pier in relationship to shoreline.

# Alaska Pier



*Figure 109: Detail of the preserved pilings at Alaska pier.*



*Figure 110: Submerged pilings at Alaska pier, 2022.*



*Figure 111: A cluster of pilings at Alaska pier, 2022.*



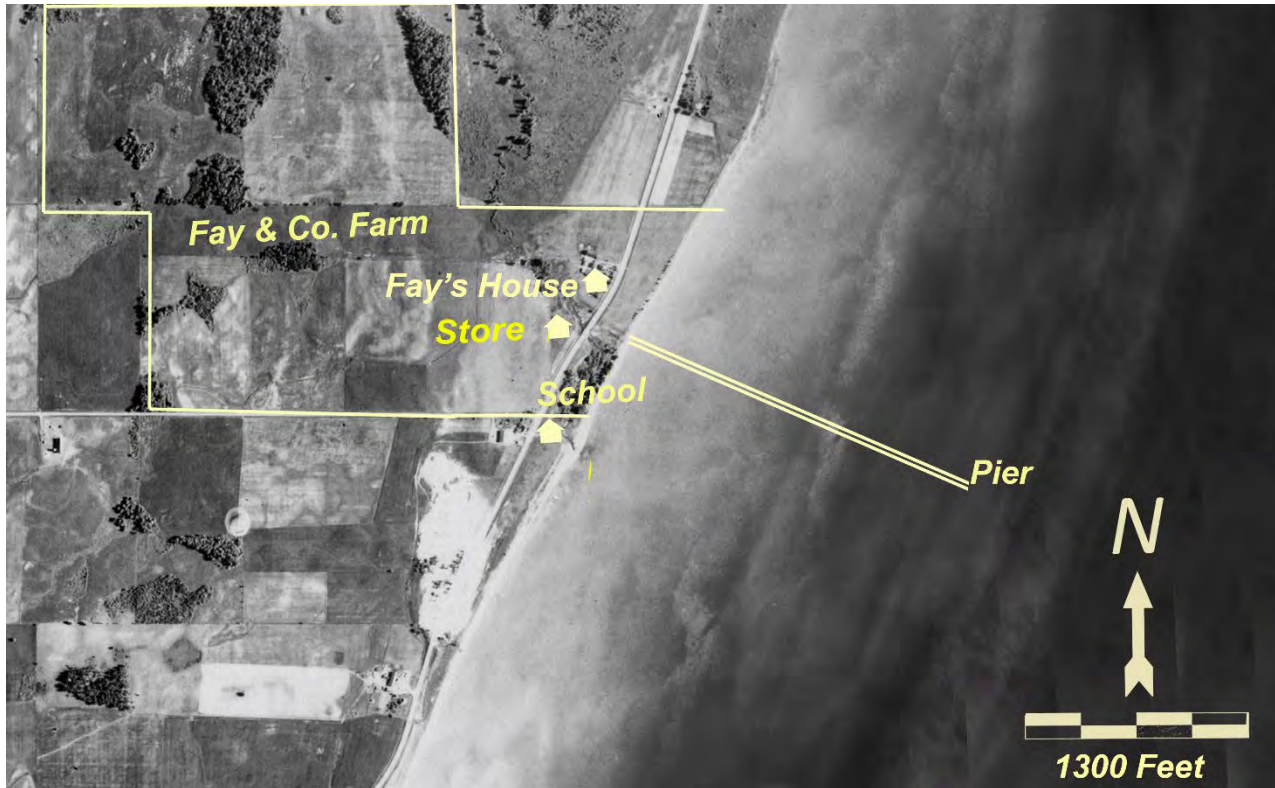
## Chapter Eleven

### Fire and Water: Langworthy Pier

A little over two miles south of Algoma, on the east side of Highway 42, a small wayside park tempts travelers on their way north to the tourist playgrounds of Door County with a chance to stretch their legs, freshen up, and pause to take in the view of Lake Michigan. The wayside looks like many others along Wisconsin's byways. It offers parking, a small kiosk plastered with faded maps, and a public restroom. Manicured lawn extends from the parking area to a wood rail fence that keeps visitors back from the edge of the lake bluffs. Those wanting a closer look at the lake have worn a path through the brush on the northern edge of the wayside. It drops down to a small pile of rip-rap, and from there to a pale cobble beach. Though the view from the beach is pleasant, there is nothing to keep a visitor there except the joy of solitude and the quiet sound of a small stream gurgling its way into the lake surf. Returning to the blufftops, visitors walking back to the parking lot might be forgiven for overlooking the small sign near the bluff edge. The sign informs readers that they stand within a lost port.



*Figure 112: Waves break on the sandbar at the mouth of the creek at Langworthy, 2023.*



*Figure 113: Location of significant buildings and features at Langworthy pier.*

Formally, the port was known as Langworthy. It was just as often referred to by the name ‘Casco Pier,’ betraying its dependence on the inland community of Casco eight miles to the west. Like Alaska Pier, Langworthy was a lumber export point. Unlike Alaska Pier, the community did not move inland. Rather, its heart was always inland and the little complex simply faded away when it was no longer wanted.

Langworthy was born in fire. In the aftermath of the fires of 1871—Kewaunee’s Great Fire, the Peshtigo Fire, the Chicago Fire—the charred pine forests of northern Kewaunee County represented hope. Timber was needed to rebuild homes and barns, to rehouse the homeless, and to reconstruct centers of commerce and industry. It was needed urgently. Edward Decker, founder of the little town of Casco, had timber in abundance. He owned a mill and had the means to turn that timber into lumber for Chicago, Peshtigo, and other burnt-over areas. What he didn’t have was a way to get his lumber where it was needed. Casco was landlocked. Decker needed a pier.

### ***Decker***

Langworthy’s short life brought it into connection with some of the more colorful residents of Kewaunee County. Edward Decker was near the head of that number. He was born in Casco Bay, Maine in 1827. Upon reaching the age of eighteen, Decker headed west to seek out new opportunities in Iowa. He made it as far as Milwaukee, arriving in 1845. In 1846, Decker journeyed northward to Oshkosh and struck a deal with the operators of the Grignon mill on the



Wolf River. He would supply them with logs in exchange for half of the resulting lumber. Decker ran logs down the Wolf River for three years. At the end of the third season, he used his profits to build a hotel in Menasha.

After the Treaty of the Wolf River was signed, Decker explored the forests east of Green Bay. He liked what he saw. In 1855 he sold his hotel and bought land. He bought lots of land—up to 10,000 acres of forestland by some accounts. He built a store and mill along a creek that would later bear his name and by that act founded the little town of Casco. The community store operated much like the pier stores did. An advertisement published in 1866 mentions “dry goods, groceries, boots & shoes, hats & caps, clothing, hardware, crockery, stoves, and in fact everything that is saleable” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1866g).



Figure 114: Edward Decker, from *Beers & Co.* 1895.

Decker’s interests extended far beyond Casco, however. He speculated in real estate. He partnered with mill owners and lumbermen in Kewaunee, raking in profit as the region’s forests fell. He brought the first printing press to Kewaunee County and founded the *Kewaunee Enterprize* (later *Enterprise*), the source for so much of the information printed in these pages. He entered local Democratic politics, then state politics. He was elected to the Wisconsin State Senate in 1859 but declined renomination in 1861 and returned to Casco and Kewaunee County life. He helped to organize the response to the local draft during the Civil War but avoided serving himself. An advertisement on the first page of the *Enterprise* of July 7, 1868, described him thusly:

Edward Decker  
Kewaunee, Wis.  
*Clerk of the County Board,*  
*Publisher of the Enterprise,*  
*Attorney at Law,*  
*Fire, Marine, & Life Insurance Agent,*  
*Banker & Conveyancer.*

Does a general Land Agency and Collection business, gives Abstracts of Titles, Pays taxes for non-residents, &c. &c. &c. (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1868h)

Most of Decker’s extensive political career was spent in County offices, as County clerk, in the Register of Deeds office, and the treasurer’s office. His positions gave him access to land and financial records and to the information they contained. He leveraged that information to the utmost, maneuvering allies into other local positions wherever possible. When the 1860s neared



Figure 115: The road from Casco to Langworthy pier, 1875 (J. Knauber & Co. 1876).

their close, the ragged and fearless young lumberjack was one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in the county (HistoryLady1 2014b). Casco grew while Decker wound his way through the twists and turns of his life. People settled there to make their homes, work in the mill, and start new businesses. John Vesser built a brewery (Wing 1921–1922:92). A grist mill and a steam sawmill were added to Casco’s industrial assets in 1865 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1865a). A furniture factory was built next to the original mill a few years later (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 18721). Transportation was a pressing issue. Casco was nearly eight miles from the lakeshore. Decker Creek, which provided the town’s waterpower, emptied into Lake Michigan via the Kewaunee River, but shipping to and from Casco by water wasn’t feasible. Decker and the other manufacturers of Casco had only one option immediately available to them—the early road system. It wasn’t good enough.

Decker sought an alternative, and his first instinct was to look inland. Just before the Civil War, he threw himself into an effort to build railroad lines and state roads from Kewaunee and Ahnapee to Green Bay. He had an ally on the Republican side of the aisle, in the form of fellow Kewaunee County merchant W. S. Finley, who held a position in the Assembly. The enterprise met with varying levels of support, but the outbreak of the Civil War put the project on everyone’s back burner. Finley found himself in the role of Draft Officer in Kewaunee and was too preoccupied with rioting Belgians to think about railroads. In 1868, Decker tried again with an even more ambitious proposal to build a railroad line between Green Bay and the Pacific Coast (Beers & Co. 1895:46; HistoryLady1 2014b). However, Decker’s second attempt to bring the railroad to Kewaunee County was doomed by an extremely unusual and unforeseen event. A horse bit Decker’s arm off.

A very serious and painful accident occurred to Hon. Edward Decker about 7 o’clock on Saturday evening last. Mr. Decker, accompanied by his cousin, was driving a pair of spirited stallions attached to a light buggy, about a mile from the village on the river road. In turning back, to return home, the tongue of the buggy broke off short, and Mr. D. got out and proceeded to attempt to unhitch the team. While doing this one of the stallions seized him by the left hand and fore arm with its teeth and in a moment bore him to the ground under its feet, and got down on

its knees, still holding him fast. Mr. D's companion sprung to his assistance, and this attracted the stallion's attention. The animal released its hold and rose up to face its assailant, and Mr. Decker crawled out from under its feet, more dead than alive.

Somehow Decker escaped without internal injuries. Decker's cousin managed to get him back to his home in Kewaunee and doctors were summoned from the surrounding region. There was little left of Decker's hand and forearm to save. The bones were crushed and the flesh torn away, and Decker was suffering "intensely" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869h). The remnants of Decker's forearm were amputated, and Decker lay near death for months. Decker's staff carried on his business, but the railroad initiative was abandoned.

### ***Out of the Ashes***

The answer to Casco's transportation woes was provided by David Hill, a New York Yankee who homesteaded a coastal farm east of Casco in the 1850s (General Land Office 2023). A small creek ran through Hill's farm and joined the lake a short distance away on the other side of the lake shore road. Hill bought title to the shoreline and built a sawmill there with the intention to enter the lumber business. In the spring of 1871, drought settled in and the countdown for the Great Fire began. Hill decided to put in a pier. The job was overseen by O. G. Rowe. Blissfully unaware of what the future held, Hill announced that he would ship from the pier as soon as it reached a length of 400 feet and entered water deep enough for schooners to safely maneuver. Construction was to continue past that point, with completion of the pier's intended 800-plus foot length expected in 1872 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871k).

The Great Fire blasted through northern Kewaunee County in late September and early October. Twenty-three families were burned out in the vicinity of Casco, and one of the mill dams caught on fire. Many more were made homeless in the Town of Pierce, closer to the lakeshore (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q, 1871u). David Hill was among them. His house, his barn, and a stockpile of 40 cords of bark and 500 railroad ties awaiting shipping dissolved into ash. He had no insurance, and his losses were estimated at about \$1,000 (nearly \$30,000 in modern currency) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871r). Decker, by then recuperated and hearing of the situation, decided that the opportunity was too good to pass up. The half-built pier was a fair distance from Casco but was situated at nearly the closest suitable point on the lakeshore. Decker offered Hill several times the amount of his losses—\$4,100 (over \$101,000 today)—for the pier and adjoining acreage. Hill accepted. The sale was announced on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1872. Decker christened the pier "Langworthy", to honor Captain A. J. Langworthy, head of the Green Bay Relief Committee, who was responsible for providing relief supplies to the thousands displaced by the firestorms.

Decker's next course of action was finding the right person to manage Casco's new port. He turned to De Wayne Stebbins of Ahnapee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872d). Stebbins' life was even more colorful than Decker's. He came to Wisconsin as a fur trader with the American Fur Company and panned gold (unsuccessfully) in California. He served as an officer in the Union Navy and participated in many of the pivotal battles on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. At one point, lore states that he nearly ordered General Ulysses S. Grant to be shot, mistaking his party for Confederates (Greenlee 1904: 867–869; HistoryLady1 2012). Stebbins was within Decker's



political orbit and worked for or alongside him for many years. In later years, he comprised half of the Boalt and Stebbins Company, a mercantile and shipping firm with piers in Ahnapee and Whitefish Bay. He would eventually take Decker's former seat in the State Senate (Greenlee 1904:867–869).

But the Boalt and Stebbins Co. and the Senate were in Stebbins's future. By late June, 1872, a complex of buildings was under construction at Langworthy pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872g). Casco itself was under renovation. The sawmill was emptied out in preparation for a complete refit, and “furniture and chair stuff” were moved from the mill to the second story of the furniture factory for storage. The workers misjudged the load capacity of the furniture factory building. The building collapsed. All of the activity drew the attention of lumberman, banker, and Civil War Captain Clinton B. Fay. Fay and Decker discussed matters, and then struck a deal that allowed Decker to retain ownership in Casco and Langworthy while freeing him to put his attention on his many other interests. The duo partnered to form the firm of C. B. Fay & Co., which took charge of the Casco mill complex and the pier.

In the woods, surveyors and lumbermen furiously cleared a new road along the eight-mile distance to Langworthy, trying to beat the weather and get the road done in time for the winter's hauling season. They were halfway there by late August. The pier itself was halfway finished too, and plans were made to put up the usual pier store (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872l).

The road crews made it, though they didn't have time to lay down plank through one stretch of swampy ground until the following June. Even so, the road did its job and remained in good condition through the winter months. Fay oversaw a refit of the Casco mill with new machinery, steam engines, edgers and saws, and a shingle shed. The Casco store, also under Fay & Co. management, did good business. That winter, Fay & Co. brought in over 2,000,000 board feet of timber and added it to the 600,000 feet already sitting in Casco's store yards. The renovated mill had the ability to run through 25,000–30,000 feet of logs each day, so the storeyards contained enough work to keep the mills busy through the summer. As the trees were shaped into lumber and shingles, they were packed onto wagons, along with posts, ties, and cordwood purchased from the surrounding farms. All was sent east to Stebbins at Langworthy (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873e).

And as for the pier? It was still half finished. That isn't to say it wasn't longer than it had been. The men building the pier didn't show any inclination of stopping. George Roberts took his steam pile driver to Langworthy and by mid-June of 1873 the Langworthy pier was 1,600 feet long and was still considered “half done” (*Ahnapee Record* 1873a). “If this can be beaten,” marveled the *Enterprise*, “we should like to hear of it” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873j). It was, at least, operational. The scow schooner *Ella Doak* landed at the pier in late June to drop off new machinery for a stave and measure factory in Casco (*Ahnapee Record* 1873b). In the meantime, a work gang pushed forward on the plank road between Casco and Langworthy, with the intention of making it “one of the best roads in the county” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873k).

Casco needed the pier and road even more than it had before. The Western Bent Wooden Ware Company moved into the rebuilt chair factory and turned out sieves, boxes, barrel covers, cheese boxes, and other items (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873k). The factory—the largest such in Wisconsin—estimated they would add \$120,000 per year to the local economy. Finished goods

were taken to Langworthy and shipped to the Chicago and St. Louis markets (*Door County Advocate* 1873b). The Fay & Co. mill produced 100,000 shingles a day in addition to lumber. The road to Langworthy was finally finished to everyone's satisfaction in early September, just in time for the 1873–1874 hauling season. Fay put a 'help wanted' ad in the papers.

Attention, Farmers! Wanted. 20 Teams to haul from Casco to our pier at Langworthy. Steady employment and good wages. C. B. Fay & Co. Casco, Wis. Sept 6, 1873 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1873n).

Just a few weeks later, the Fay & Co. sawmill shut down for the season (*Door County Advocate* 1873c). The haulers took over.

Traffic between Casco and Langworthy was steady through the winter of 1873–1874. Haulers were paid by the load, and each trip's take was added to the total in their account. By the last days of February 1874 the shingle haulers were competing to see who could rack up the largest account, creating "quite a lively time on the road to Langworthy pier" (*Ahnapee Record* 1874e). In mid-March, a shingle hauler named John Kinney set the record for the season:

Well! Well! Well! Who would have thought it? But it's so, and no mistake! You see his name is John Kinney, and he drives team for Ed. Wyman on the Casco and Ahnapee road! Some-one said that he couldn't do it, but he said he could, and he did! He hauled exactly *twenty-two thousand* shingles to the Langworthy pier, and took a wagon to do it too! (*Ahnapee Record* 1874f).

Schooners were on their way north from Chicago, bound for Langworthy Pier within the next two weeks. The schooner *Bates* cleared Chicago on April 1, 1874, loaded with 'sundries' for Casco (*Chicago Tribune* 1874a). The stream of haulers slowed and

**C. B. FAY & CO.,**  
CASCO, WIS.  
Have an immense stock of choice and carefully selected  
**FAMILY GROCERIES**  
Which are offered at  
**Bottom Figures!!!**  
All goods warranted as represented.  
**Largest prices paid for Hay, Grain and Bark, delivered at our store or pier.**  
Casco, Wis., July 1st. 2-5xtf.

**C. B. FAY & Co.,**  
Casco, Wisconsin.  
Are now offering to the people of the County a large and elegant stock of  
**Dress Goods,**  
Notions, &c., at prices which defy competition. Fresh arrivals of choice novelties and newest styles by every steamer. Call and see us and convince yourselves!  
Casco, Wis., July 1st, 1874. 2-5xtf.

**C. B. FAY & CO., CASCO, WIS.**  
MANUFACTURERS OF AND DEALERS IN  
**PINE LUMBER,**  
**SHINGLES, LATH,**  
**PICKETS, &C.**  
Bills saved to order.  
**Dry and Dressed Lumber**  
**Constantly on Hand.**  
Highest market price paid

Figure 116: Advertisements for C. B. Fay & Co. from the *Kewaunee Enterprise* (1874p).

ceased as the logging season gave way to spring and the shipping season. The mill was idle, and the workers were at Langworthy, busy with other tasks.

Casco is dull! In fact, Casco is *very* dull! When it becomes necessary to give utterance to the above exclamation, you may set it down as a certainty that the *dullest* place on this mundane sphere is Casco. Such a still and quiet as have stolen over the place is beyond belief. Only a few stray teams are seen, passing through from the neighboring towns and then they even seem to be overcome with the hushed spirit of the town and make hardly an audible rattle. You see, Casco has a sawmill. In fact, the sawmill is Casco. Now the mill having shut down for some six weeks or a month, the quiet is easily and readily accounted for.

The writer of the above note ended his letter to the *Ahnapee Record* by mentioning that the mill workers were all working to prepare the pier at Langworthy to be lengthened again, as it still wasn't long enough for everyone's satisfaction (*Ahnapee Record* 1874g). Shipping was brisk in 1874 even so. A gang of loaders, seeing their chance, went on strike in April. Captain Decker, of the schooner *Grant*, balked at their demands and brought in a new crew. The strikers resisted and tried to stop the work. Captain Decker ended the affray with a "judicious handling of fire-arms" (*Ahnapee Record* 1874i).

That season, Langworthy pier was the scene of considerable bustle. The schooner *Rob Roy* brought 800 bushels of oats north from Chicago in May, presumably to feed the mill company's horses (*Chicago Tribune* 1874b). The schooners *Regulator* and *Mary Booth* picked up lumber and shingles in June (*Ahnapee Record* 1874k; *Chicago Tribune* 1874c). The *Mary Booth* returned with 100 more bushels of oats, five barrels of pork, and 'sundries' in September (*Chicago Tribune* 1874d), and the schooner *Minne Mueller* picked up a load of cedar posts (*Chicago Tribune* 1874e). The *Rob Roy* made several trips from Casco to Chicago and back in October and November, carrying lumber and 'feed' (*Chicago Tribune* 1874f, 1874g, 1874h).

Casco and Langworthy found their stride just as the pineries era was coming to an end in Kewaunee County. A representative of the Wisconsin Lumberman's Association traveled through the region in 1874 and assessed the situation.

Most of the accessible pine timber has been cut off, and operations in the woods are mainly directed to cutting cord wood, bark, ties and posts...At Casco, 12 miles northeast of Kewaunee, in the interior of the county, Messrs. C. B. Fay and company have a saw mill and shingle mill. This firm turns out about 12,000,000 shingles and 500,000 feet of lumber per annum. This is conveyed by team to their pier at Langworthy and from there shipped south (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1964).

The same account mentioned one Charles Bintlign, who was said to have a lumbering business of his own at Langworthy (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1964). Casco itself was slightly smaller than it had been. Decker's original house, which was occupied by the C. B. Fay & Co.'s stable boss while a new stable building was being completed, burned to the ground (*Ahnapee Record* 1874f). In July, writers for the *Kewaunee Enterprise* visited both Casco and Langworthy to see Casco's new lath



Figure 117: 1870s lumber haulers on a corduroy road, Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Wisconsin Historic Image 78303.

mill and a broom handle machine capable of making four to five thousand handles a day. Workers at three hand machines turned out 120,000 shingles per day. If that total is accurate, quite a backlog of shingles was accumulating, since the same report stated that only 100,000 shingles were being hauled down the plank road to Langworthy daily. The main mill had been shut down, “excepting clear stuff,” for weeks because the pier wasn’t finished yet (*Ahnapee Record* 1874k; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874i).

In June of 1874, that changed. The pier was finally done. While not the longest bridge pier on the west side of Lake Michigan, it was close and firmly captured second place. Bents marched out into the lake for 1,830 feet, taking the pier into twelve-foot depths capable of accommodating steamers at the far end. The outer 400 feet of the pier was over sixty feet wide (*Ahnapee Record* 1874h; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874i). Casco sent it everything it had. Casco was “a small place”, said the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, “but a very busy one.” In 1874, the C. B. Fay & Co. mill shipped out 1.5 million board feet of lumber, 16 million shingles, 20,000 railroad ties, 10,000 cedar posts, 1,200 cords of wood, and 1,500 cords of bark. The *Enterprise* confirmed that a store already was in operation at the pier, even as a larger store was contemplated (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874o).

W. M. Hilton, an employee of the C. B. Fay Company, put out a help-wanted ad for wood choppers to saw up 2,000 cords of wood at a location mid-way between Casco and Langworthy. He promised “a liberal price” to be “paid every Saturday night” (*Ahnapee Record* 1874q). Fay & Co. decided to go ahead with construction of a bigger store at the pier, to be run by Mr. Charles Sabins. In this, Fay & Co. reversed the path taken by Bach, Kieweg, and Dishmaker at Carlton. Whereas Carlton expanded by opening a branch store inland, Casco expanded by putting a branch store at the pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874t). The new, larger store opened just after the arrival of 1875. “They are too busy at present opening goods and attending to customers to write up an advertisement,” said the writers at the *Kewaunee Enterprise* (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875b).

### Wood Choppers, Attention!

The Subscriber wishes to get sawed 1,500 to 2,000 cords of Wood, on the Casco road four miles west of Langworthy Pier. A liberal price will be paid every Saturday night. Ahnapee, October 19th, 1874.  
WM HILTON.

Figure 118: Help wanted ad run in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874p.

## Slaughter of the Pines

The year’s seasons came full circle. A scant snowfall kicked off the 1873–1874 logging and hauling season. C. B. Fay & Co. had sixty workers on their books and planned to take on at least a hundred “as soon as the sleighing is good” (*Door County Expositor* 1874b). Their mill yards already contained a million board feet of timber and they intended to pull in three million (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874u). One month later, they had one million more in and only needed another million to meet their goal (*Door County Advocate* 1875a). The mill, which lay idle much of the previous year, fired up at the end of January (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875e).

From Casco. Casco, Jan. 27, 1875. Editor *Enterprise*: Notwithstanding the scarcity of money, the dullness of the lumber market and the general depression of business, the mill of C. B. Fay & Co., which, for want of logs has not been in operation since October, resumed the slaughter of pine on Monday of this week. As this institution gives employment to about fifty men, upon whom families are dependent, it is a matter of general satisfaction to the neighborhood to see it running again (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875e).

Conditions for the mill workers were brutal. A blizzard buried the community in snow and blocked the roads with drifts up to ten feet high. Traffic on the roads came to a standstill, but not for long. Teams of horses broke up the drifts and kept the timber coming in. The mill had quotas to meet—up to 10,000 feet of lumber and 95,000 shingles per day, milled out of the 35,000 of timber arriving daily (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875f). Mother Nature did not cooperate. Temperatures dropped to more than twenty degrees below zero. Logging stopped. The roads were more or less impassable. The younger mill workers revolted.

From Casco. The condition of the roads in this vicinity is such as to render hauling impracticable. Accordingly lumbermen, as well as others at work in the woods, have suspended operations, and perhaps will not resume this season. Last Tuesday morning being rather unpleasant the knot sawyers engaged in this mill,



who are principally boys living in the village, unanimously “bolted”. This necessitated the mill’s lying idle that day, but the following morning a new delegation of the above named profession having arrived, it was in full blast again. This continuous cold weather is trying the patience of the Cascoites. On every hand we hear of frozen fingers, ears, noses, &c., which causes an unusual amount of whining, mingled with some very expressive language (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875g).

After another week and the return of warmer weather, things went back to normal. The pier store did a “lively business” and the amount of timber products coming in was satisfying (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875h). By the end of March 1875, massive quantities of wood were staged on the pier or on shore: over one million shingles, 2,000 cords of wood, 200 cords of bark, 70,000 cedar posts, and “large quantities” of lumber (*Door County Advocate* 1875c). By the end of the season, the logging gangs working for C. B. Fay & Co. had cut and moved 5,000,000 feet of timber, far exceeding their target (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875k).

The place the goods were being shipped to was no longer called Langworthy. The old name was dropped. New postmaster Charles Sabin opened a post office in the pier store and the port was officially re-christened “Casco Pier” (Kannerwurl et al. 2010). The lake fleet came to Casco Pier in 1875 just as it had to Langworthy in 1874, but the season did not start off well. The schooner *E. M. Stanton* took barrels of beef and sundries to Casco Pier in late April (*Inter Ocean* 1875a). A few days later, the schooner *E. G. Gray* departed Chicago bound for Casco Pier to pick up wood (*Chicago Tribune* 1875a). The crews were loading her cargo when a storm blew up. Captain Jas. Austin cast off and turned south to get out of striking range of the pier and into deeper water. In the first few moments of the *E. G. Gray*’s withdrawal she collided with a submerged boulder. The blow tore her rudder away and smashed a hole through her hull (*Ahnapee Record* 1875i; *Door County Advocate* 1875e).

The rudderless and sinking ship careened towards the beach. Captain Austin ordered the deck load thrown into the lake in an attempt to lighten the vessel, but as she entered the shallows a series of hollow booms announced that the stricken *E. G. Grey* was pounding on the lake bottom. The schooner’s keel snapped. The ship grounded one-half mile south of Casco Pier in six feet of water. The crew abandoned ship. As seemed so often to be the case where ships went down near the piers, Captain Austin had just bought the schooner and spent a fair sum repairing her but did not have insurance. The schooner was declared a loss. A salvor from Ahnapee stripped her of anything movable for resale in Chicago (*Ahnapee Record* 1875i; *Door County Advocate* 1875e).

The remainder of the shipping season was incident-free. The schooner *Mary Booth* loaded at Casco while the broken remains of the *E. G. Grey* were being stripped south of the pier (*Ahnapee Record* 1875j). The schooner *Ithica* picked up cedar posts, the schooner *Rob Roy* made multiple trips picking up cord wood, lumber, and cedar posts and dropping off oats, hay, seeds, and merchandise for the stores (*Chicago Tribune* 1875b, 1875c, 1875d, 1875e, 1875f, 1875g; *Inter Ocean* 1875b, 1875c, 1875e). The schooners *L. Painter* and *Tuscola* loaded wood (*Inter Ocean* 1875c, 1875d). The schooner *W. H. Hawkins* sailed north with merchandise for the store and returned to Chicago laden with lumber a few days later (*Ahnapee Record* 1875v; *Chicago Tribune* 1875h).

Winter's arrival brought changes as the company's partners switched their fields of attention. C. B. Fay moved to Casco Pier and took over the store. Decker, meantime, made plans to move back to Casco and resume oversight of the mill and store there. An advertisement blitz in the papers promoted the deals to be had at both locations.

Let the People Rejoice! New Goods at Casco Pier! C. B. Fay & Co. Have a complete stock of General Merchandise In store at Casco Pier. The goods will be sold at the Lower Prices. Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Ready Made Clothing, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Etc. Lumber and Shingle for Sale (*Ahnapee Record* 1875w).

Fay & Co. advertised for thirty more wood choppers, with a promised payment of one dollar per cord of wood (about \$27.50 in modern currency). Applicants were directed to the company's offices in Casco and Casco Pier, and to W. M. Hilton in Ahnapee (*Ahnapee Record* 1875x). Soon, cut wood, railroad ties, and posts flowed through Casco and towards Casco Pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876b). The shipping season started in early April, as the schooner *H. Rand* dropped off a load of Casco's railroad ties in Chicago (*Chicago Tribune* 1876a). The Casco mill fired up as well, but despite the seeming bustle the amount of wood coming in was not comparable to the exceeded quota of the previous year. Most of what was arriving was hardwood. The pine was nearly gone (*Door County Advocate* 1876d).

April of 1876 brought the schooners *C. J. Roeder*, *Mariner*, *S. G. Andrews*, and *Ketchum* to pick up railroad ties and cedar posts (*Chicago Tribune* 1876b, 1876c, 1876d). The shipping season did not last long. Summer brought shipping to a literal crashing halt.

In early July 1876, the bark *Sunrise* sailed northward along the western Lake Michigan coastline. She was traveling light, with the task of picking up iron ore in Escanaba, Michigan. Her crew was likely in a somber mood. As they were readying to leave St. Joseph, crewman John A. Anderson fell to his death from the mainmast (*Inter Ocean* 1876). It was a bad omen. The *Sunrise* was a large and solid vessel, of a type that usually stayed out in deep water. She did not do so this trip. Instead, her captain steered her along a course approximately 1,400 feet offshore. Casco Pier, of course, was 1,830 feet long.

Whether the weather was poor or it was too dark to see, the *Sunrise* unknowingly sailed straight for the pier. The hissing sound of water parting under the bow of the vessel gave way to a jarring thud and the horrible sound of splintering timbers. The bark smashed directly through the pier, just inside the point where it expanded out to its full double width. A hole forty feet wide yawned where pier decking and piles had been, cutting the onshore portions of the pier complex off from the pier's staging and loading area. Fay found himself with a crippled pier in the midst of shipping season (*Ahnapee Record* 1876e). Fortunately, Fay and his workers still had 1,400 feet of pier left within reach and shipping resumed again in short order as repairs commenced. The schooner *Charley Hibbard* picked up lumber before the month was through (*Chicago Tribune* 1876c).

The end of the shipping season was accompanied by another catastrophe. A November gale blew through and took another 500 feet of the pier away with it (*Door County Expositor* 1876). The pier that had taken so long to build was carved away piece by piece by negligent sailing and nature. Fay



Figure 119: Casco pier on the 1876 plat map of Kewaunee County (J. Knauber & Co. 1876).

arranged to have a steam pile driver sent down from Ahnapee. Fay and Decker's mill, which had a "very successful summer's operation" despite the year's events, shut down for the winter (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1976). In any case, the pier complex was about to become someone else's problem.

### ***Dull and Getting Duller***

This was Casco Pier just after its peak. There are few records of the appearance and operation of the pier and its support facilities. Most attention was given to where the action was, in Casco itself. Even so, the complex must have had the usual complement of buildings: the pier store, worker's housing, barns and stables, and necessary shops and support facilities. The 1876 plat map, which captures the appearance of Casco Pier in 1875, only depicts three buildings (Figure 119). One, south of the ravine and west of the lakeshore road, is labeled 'store' (J. Knauber & Co. 1876). The other, on the other side of the ravine may be the Fay or Stebbins residence. The final building, just east or southeast of the intersection of the Casco road and the lakeshore road, was a school.

The David Hill mill building, based on later accounts, was still standing in the ravine itself, though it does not appear on the map. Mr. Hill retained a 40-acre parcel adjacent to the C. B. Fay & Co. holdings, which extended inland to encompass most of a quarter-Section of acreage. The Fay & Co. land was likely being used as a pier farm, much like the Taylor & Bach property down in Carlton.

Fay and Decker's workmen labored for months to build the pier to give their mills and businesses a link to the southern markets. A few short years later, the pineries were all but gone. The hardwood trade continued, but the business partners sought other means to occupy their time and other ways

to fill their pockets. In the meanwhile, they rented the pier complex out to Frank Kwapil, manager of the Alaska pier two miles further down the coastline (*Ahnapee Record* 1876i). When the 1876 logging and hauling season arrived, there wasn't enough wood left to occupy the lumberman's time. The lumberjacks looked north to Door County for employment (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1876s). C. B. Fay, who had taken over as postmaster, resigned and the post office at Casco Pier shut down (*Ahnapee Record* 1876j). The pier store closed shortly afterwards. Kwapil, busy with his many other affairs, installed Albert Dworak at Casco Pier in the role of on-site manager (*Ahnapee Record* 1877a). The school, now headed by Lillian McNally, daughter of John McNally at Sandy Bay pier, continued on (*Ahnapee Record* 1876j).

Casco Pier regressed. Fay retired from the lumber business...sort of. He arranged for a house and barn to be built at the pier, so that he could "earn his sustenance by the sweat of his brow" (*Ahnapee Record* 1877c). His new home gave him a good vantage point where he could keep an eye on his tenants at the pier and the comings and goings there. By mid-March, 1877, enough wood and timber products had accumulated in the pieryard to fill five ships (*Ahnapee Record* 1877c). The schooner *C. J. Roeder* arrived to take one load in April (*Ahnapee Record* 1877d) and the rest followed in turn. That September, Fay and Decker dissolved their partnership. C. B. Fay & Co. was no more (*Green Bay Advocate* 1877). Fay retained ownership of Casco Pier and the Casco store (*Door County Advocate* 1879a). 1878 arrived and schooners came and went. The *C. J. Roeder* picked up posts in May (*Inter Ocean* 1878). The scow *Lady Ellen* visited in August (*Ahnapee Record* 1878g).

Three incidents at Casco Pier made the news in 1878. In July 1878, a farmer or hauler named Thomas Larking fell in front of his own wagon and was run over (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878q). In August, former manager Stebbins arranged with new partner Boalt to buy Casco pier's pile-driver and send it to Whitefish Bay (*Ahnapee Record* 1878g). The schooner *Franklin*, on her way north to Door County, was blown ashore near the pier (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878s).

The 1879 season was, for all intents and purposes, Casco Pier's last. It started off well. The *Kewaunee Enterprise* reported that eight loads of logs were coming into the Casco mill each day and ties were being hauled "lakeshoreward by the wholesale" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879c). The shipping season proceeded apace. As harvest season arrived, however, Fay suffered an accident on his farm. His wagon broke in the midst of bringing in grain, so Fay jury-rigged a workaround with the intention to drive the broken wagon to a neighbor's house and borrow one in better repair so he could finish his task. As he stepped between the horses in the team to adjust their traces, a board he had jury-rigged to the wagon popped loose and startled the team. They tried to bolt and knocked Fay to the ground. One of the horses brought its hoof down on his skull, knocking him unconscious. When he came to, he had been dragged for an unknown distance. He was badly bruised and concussed, but alive. His recuperation took some time (*Ahnapee Record* 1879d; *Door County Advocate* 1879e).

And that was that. Fay was incapacitated by a horse, just as his former partner had been years before. Kwapil didn't renew his lease. The next spring, silence reigned instead of the clatter of teams passing back and forth along the plank road to Casco. Casco Pier, one of the most impressive on the lake, 'lived' for only nine short years.





Figure 120: The creek that empties into Lake Michigan at Casco pier, looking inland.

Where once was all activity and bustle, and where the products of a country mill were shipped in large quantities, and where the gratifying, say-so of a shrewd business man might be heard that new industries would be begun and a thriving borough spring up, has now given place to desolation and decay. Such is the state of affairs at Casco Pier. The long pier is naked, even the martins giving up building their nests under it, the store is emptied, and the rat is “monarch of all he surveys,” the sandy road is the same as of yore, and the deep creek gurgles now the same as then (*Door County Advocate* 1880b).

### **Rebirth**

Two years passed. Fay emigrated to Kansas. The Casco Pier property and Casco store moved from his hands back into Decker’s, though Fay retained some manufacturing interests in Wisconsin (Hogg & Wright 1882:118; *Door County Advocate* 1885e). In January of 1882, C. W. Baldwin of Montpelier bought the pier complex. Baldwin announced plans to repair Hill’s mill and get it running again (*Ahnapee Record* 1882b). Shortly afterwards, he moved his family to the coast and got to work. The sawmill was running by the end of June (*Ahnapee Record* 1882c, 1882o). At the end of 1883, he added grist and flour milling machinery (*Ahnapee Record* 1883q).

The power for the resurrected mill was supplied by the millpond and creek (Figure 120), and it ran whenever conditions allowed. In April of 1887, a sudden spring thaw put an end to it all. A roaring torrent struck the foundations of the mill and the building crumbled in the current.

Efforts were made to divert the course of the water in order to save the mill, but they were of no avail, and in the evening the entire structure was carried over the bluff into the lake, a mass of debris and ruin, and not a vestige of the mill was to be seen, except the water wheel, which stood solitary and alone, in its place. The mill was built about twenty years ago by Hill & Bentling and operated by them



for a number of years. About six years ago it was purchased by C. W. Baldwin, who has run it at intervals since that time. He estimates his loss at about five hundred dollars (*Ahnapee Record* 1887c).

Despite vows to rebuild, the mill complex and pier fade from history after this point. Langworthy was born in fire but died in flood.

## Chapter Twelve

### Hard Luck on Stoney Creek: Foscoro

The final lost coastal community in Kewaunee County is barely within the county's confines at all. Local lore states that even the residents of Foscoro weren't sure which county they lived in at times (HistoryLady1 2013b). Foscoro was founded where Stoney (or Stony) Creek drops down into Lake Michigan, just south of the border between Kewaunee and Door counties. As it grew, some of its significant buildings were constructed on the Door County side of the line.

The low bluffs and relatively strong and fast-flowing water of Stoney Creek provided mill power and made lumber transport easier than in many other locations along the coast. Initially, Foscoro was—to use a term favored by the newspapers of the time—'lively.' At its peak, its shipping rivaled even Green Bay, and the community had the largest confirmed residential population of all of Kewaunee's lost ports. Like Dean's Pier/Carlton, Foscoro was a survivor. It shipped lumber and timber products in one form or another into the 1890s and the arrival of the railroad, which passed it by. Unlike Dean's Pier/Carlton, Foscoro was plagued by bad luck so persistent that one wonders if it was cursed.

#### *A Song for the Road*

The land around the mouth of Stoney Creek was first claimed by Nicholas Wolmer in 1856 (Bureau of Land Management 2023), but it was a commercial enterprise begun by George W. Foster that gave the community its start (Figure 121). George Warren Foster was one of the movers and shakers of Port Washington—a better-educated New York counterpoint to Edward Decker's Maine-bred toughness. The parallels between the two are striking and suggest that it was a particular type of man who rose to the top of Pineries society. Foster, like Decker, worked his first job at an early age, spent time as a lumberjack, founded a mill town, started a partisan newspaper, lobbied for the railroad, and leveraged a County position to boost his prospects in life.

The two men's lives diverge from there. Decker's early life was rough, and he didn't attend public school. He took his first job as a clerk in his uncle's general store at the age of 14 (Beers 1895:45). Foster taught school at the age of 15. He went on to study law and even put in a stint at Yale, though he did not graduate from that institution. He worked in various positions in the courts of New York state for a time, then emigrated to Milwaukee to open his own law office in 1845. After a short and unprofitable sojourn in the newborn city, he headed north into the forestlands of Sheboygan County and found a position in a lumber camp.

He wasn't there long. Foster's prize possession was his library, and he worried it was not being taken care of to his standards. He went back to Milwaukee to fuss over his books, then steeled himself for the return trip up the Green Bay road to a lumberjack's life. On the way back, Foster stopped for a while in the Town of Grafton. He "sang a song to assist in passing the time pleasantly." This drew the attention of a small crowd, including settler Orman Coe. The pair struck up a conversation, and Coe—perhaps sensing that Foster was not the type of person who would thrive in a lumber camp—suggested that Foster take the sole teaching position in the school in Port Washington.

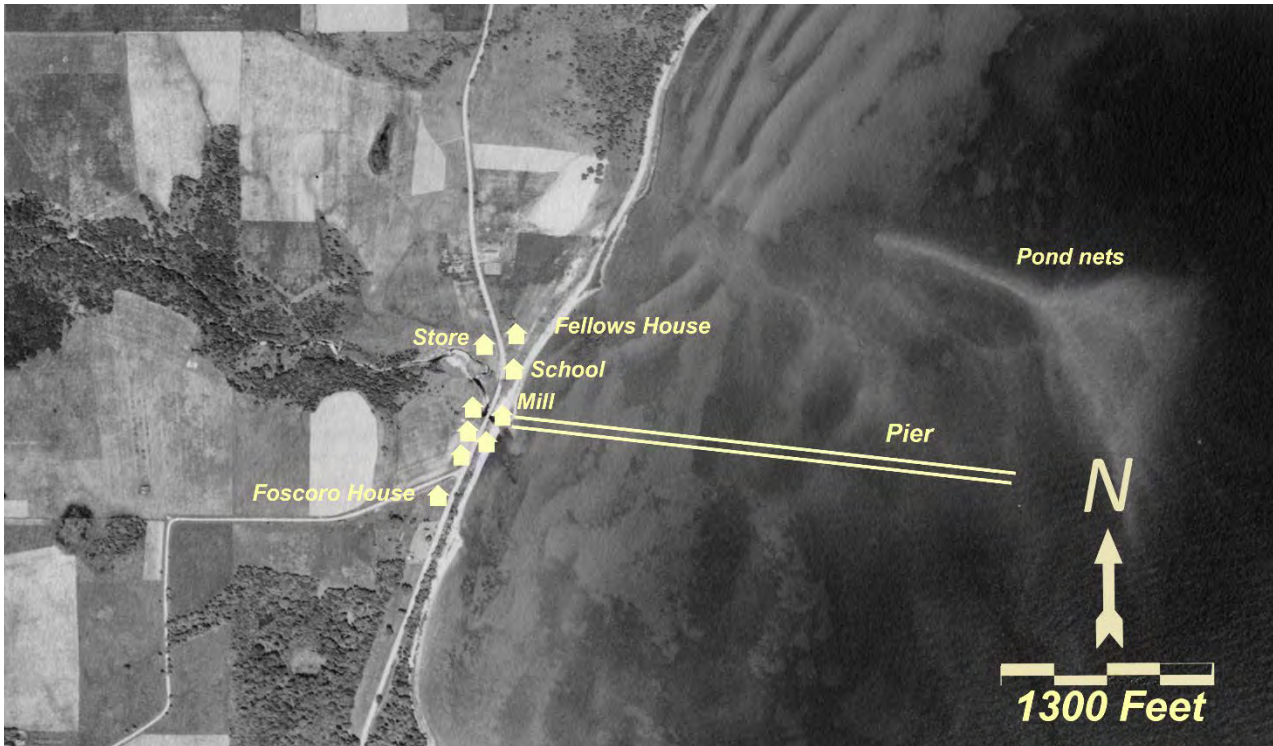


Figure 121: Reconstructed layout of the Foscoro complex, superimposed on 1938 aerial photo (USDA 1938).

Foster weighed the prospect of certain pay for strenuous and dangerous work against the prospect of a hypothetical career spent inside and out of the elements, and—probably grudgingly—decided that cash in hand was better. He continued north. Shortly after he returned to camp, a letter from Orman Coe arrived with an official offer from Port Washington’s school board. The job was his if he wanted it. “Not having done manual labor in several years,” a later biography noted, “he at once came to Port Washington” (Western Historical Co 1881c:740).

Foster taught at the school for a time, then tried his luck at surveying. He worked as a County surveyor for several years and hung his shingle back out as a lawyer. He got to know Orman Coe a bit better. He got to know Coe’s daughter Mary Elizabeth a lot better. In 1849, Coe gave his blessing and watched as the two were united in the bonds of marriage.

Foster’s first forays into lumber speculation began in 1850. He used his skills as a surveyor to lay out lots for a town along the upper reaches of the Milwaukee River at a point where the river could be dammed. He partnered with one H. J. Turner to fund that dam and then helped finance the construction of water-powered saw and grist mills. The mills, and the workers and settlers who came to them and bought Foster’s lots, were the start of modern Waubeka, Wisconsin (Western Historical Co. 1881c:505, 522, 540, 738–740).

Mary Elizabeth’s brother Harvey Leicester Coe was eight years old when his parents emigrated to Port Washington from New York state, and only thirteen when his sister married Foster. After an adolescence spent on the shores of Lake Michigan, Coe set out to follow in his brother-in-law’s

footsteps. He attended Lawrence University and Carroll College. He spent the years of the Civil War farming and working as a surveyor, eventually becoming County surveyor just as Foster had, before journeying eastward to study law at Albany. Coe graduated just after the war's end. When he returned to Port Washington, he took the position of junior partner in his brother-in-law's practice, forming the law firm of Foster & Coe (Western Historical Co. 1881c:483, 738–739).

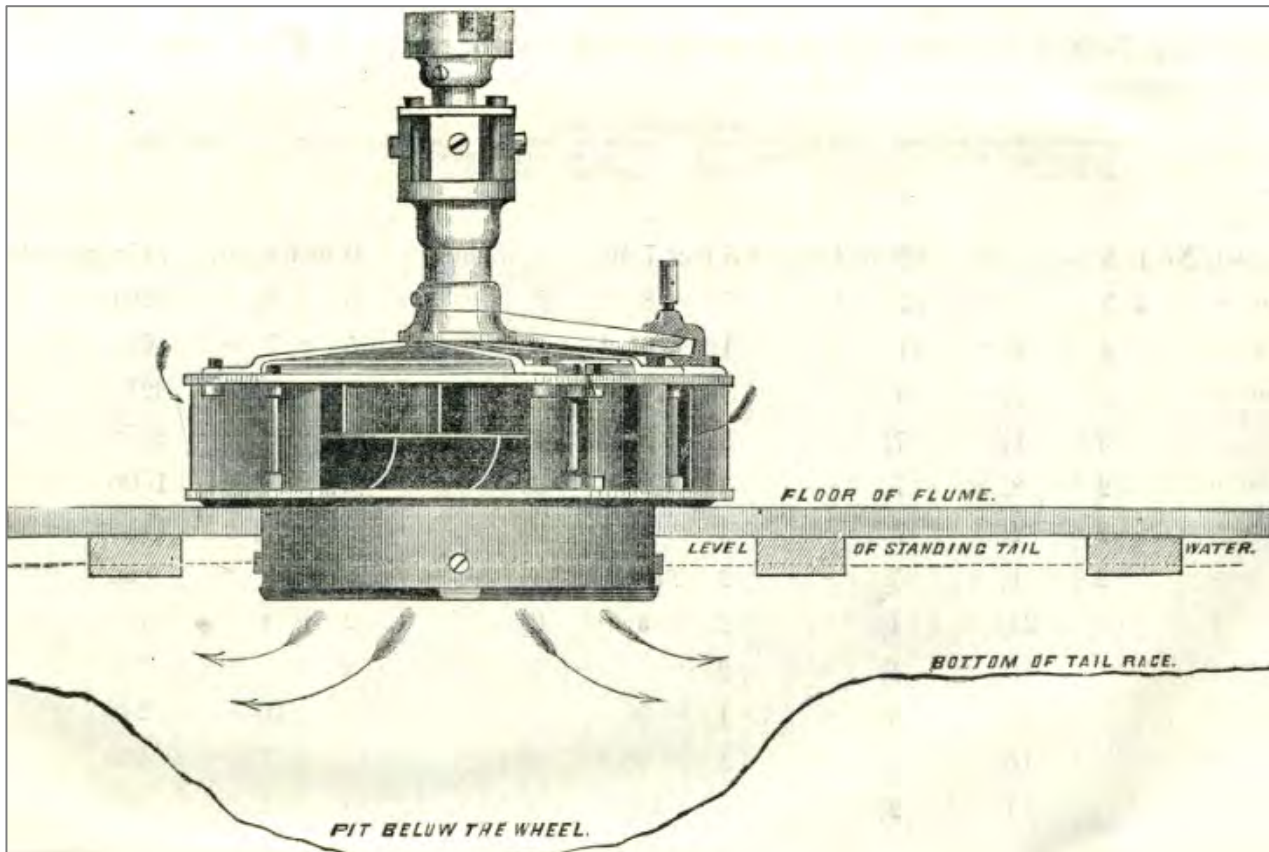
In 1866, Orman Coe bought the parcel of land that included the mouth of Stoney Creek. Foster and the younger Coe, understanding the potential of the property, decided to try to replicate the success of Foster's Waubeka venture. Why a mill had not been built there earlier is somewhat of a mystery, though its northern location may have worked against it. One early owner, ship's captain Abraham Hall, built early mills on the Ahnapee River in the late 1850s, but did not do so at Stoney Creek. Its next owner, fellow ship's captain Henry Harkins, also engaged in the lumbering business during his career and also failed to take advantage of the location (Boyd et al. 2020:9–11).

Historic records suggest that Harkins, who took possession in 1861, might have been more interested in the location's potential for fish than timber. The area at the mouth of Stoney Creek was a productive fishing ground. In November of 1859, when Hall owned the property, one Ben Boutin arrived in Kewaunee with sixty barrels of salted fish taken from the Stoney Creek fishing grounds in course of a single month "with the help of only one hand, and that one lame" (*Kewaunee Enterprize* 1859g). Family lore held that Captain Charles Fellows, a resident of Algoma, brought his wife Mary and young sons George and Fred to Stoney Creek in those years, setting up a fishing shanty of his own near a Potawatomi fishing camp. Fellows left his family on the beach while he harvested whitefish and sturgeon out on the lake. George and Fred played with balls made from discarded sturgeon heads and were looked after by an elderly Potawatomi woman (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1925).

Stoney Creek also plays a role in the mystery of the Silver Creek Pier. The Stony Creek parcel is listed amongst the holdings auctioned off for non-payment of the debts or taxes owed by Valentine and Wells. Many of the later leading citizens of Foscoro are named as defendants in the Shaw lawsuit. There is no indication, however, that Valentine, Wells, or Shaw ever owned the Stoney Creek property (see Chapter Eight).

In early 1869, Amelia Coe, another of Orman Coe's daughters, married a Wisconsin-born Civil War sergeant named George Augustus Rowe. At that point, Orman Coe lived at Stoney Creek (*Ahnapee Record* 1876b). Foster and the younger Coe lost no time partnering with Rowe, and the trio of brothers-in-law started work on a new town. Rowe took over as the on-site overseer and manager under the watchful eye of the elder Coe. The younger Coe and Foster remained in Port Washington and handled matters to the south. Needing a name for their new settlement, the men combined their own: Foster-Coe-Rowe (Foscoro).

*This sequence of events has echoes of the founding of Dean's Pier. A small three-person partnership (presuming that Taylor was a hidden partner at Dean's Pier) composed of friends and relatives, led by a senior partner with experience founding and making money off of a lumber town, bought land at the mouth of a stream. As at Dean's Pier, some partners (Dean/Rowe) moved to the location of the proposed community while others*



(Borland and Taylor/Foster and Coe) Figure 122: Diagram showing proper installation of a Leffel wheel (Leffel & Co. 1867:39).

handled shipping closer to the southern cities. As at Dean's Pier, one of the first orders of business was construction of a mill.

### ***The Sweetest Village that the Waters of Lake Michigan Shall Kiss... (1869–1872)***

By late February 1870 a dam straddled the mouth of Stoney Creek and the basic structure of the mill was standing. Haulers dropped off timbers near the frozen beach, destined to make up the framework of Foscoro's first pier. A Leffel wheel and other machinery for the mill were expected by steamer once the lake ice was gone (Figure 122).

The arrival of the Leffel wheel marked one of the first significant choices made at Foscoro, and a point of divergence between Dean's Pier and Foscoro. Elisha Dean and John Borland purchased machinery for a steam mill. Foster, Coe, and Rowe chose water. This choice echoed in later years. Both steam and water mills had their pros and cons. Many of Kewaunee County's sawmills were steam mills. Steam mills could be run in the absence of flowing water, but were relatively expensive, required specialized machinery, and burned through cordwood that might otherwise have been sold at market. Stoney Creek provided enough kinetic energy to power a water mill, and



so Foster, Coe, and Rowe opted to take the most cost-effective route. However, they also opted to build something a bit more modern than a run-of-the-mill water mill.

Leffel wheels first entered the market in 1862, just a few years before Foscoro's founding. Water at Leffel mills was funneled under the mill's machinery rather than alongside it, through a channel, chute, or box containing the wheel. The wheel, which acted as a turbine, spun horizontally in the current and rotated a vertical axle connected to the belts and pulleys that powered the mill's various saws and machines. In the case of the Foscoro mill, the Leffel wheel supplied power to circular saws set up to cut lumber and shingles. The partners estimated that their mill would be able to cut 25,000 board feet daily (*Door County Advocate* 1870; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870c). Work continued through spring, and the mill started up in late May or early June. The first piles for the pier were driven into the lake bottom shortly afterwards. The partners announced plans for a grist mill and pier store (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1870g).

In the spring of the year of the Great Fire, a curious article written by one "Jeannie" appeared in the *Milwaukee News*. It glorified Foscoro and eviscerated Foster, Coe & Rowe, Co.

...Such thick forests of cedar and of such magnificent trees in height and circumference I never saw anywhere else. They seem unwilling that the pines should overtop them. And the pines of which there is a very liberal sprinkling are as fine as any of the Peninsula between Green Bay and the Lake. But what shall I say of the forests of sugar maple there...of a circumference of six feet and a shaft of fifty feet in length without a limb and without diminution in size so that they seem to me perhaps that they now perform a sweeter office? ...I am certain I never saw such a magnificent maple forest at any other place...So much for the forests and groves of this place; you would know its features. To the north of the village plat, almost at a quarter of a mile the high bluff at the lake recedes...forty or fifty rods and diminishes to a gentler height which extends southerly about the same distance from the lake for some miles and then returns to the shore again. Within this amphitheatre is the...sweetest village that the waters of Lake Michigan shall kiss. The surface of the ground from the gentle hill descends softly to the lake so that there can be no idle water there and the soil is rich and easy of cultivation. Springs of chalybeate water abound...I thought when I first saw the spot that imagination might call it the home of the fairies. One other feature I shall tell you of—in this amphitheatre descends a stream easily as large as Cedar creek in Ozaukee county, bounding along as if glad to get there, and then stops in a...estuary at the Lake and smiles upon the scene. The Indian name of this stream, I understand to be Sensippi, which I am informed means "stream of rocks", a name very appropriate as its bed is filled with the freight of some former glacier. Such was the place when the canny hand of nature left it. But then came a Mr. Rowe from Chicago and a Mr. Coe and a Mr. Foster from Port Washington—and must it be dug a large lake for the water of this Sinsippi to run in, built a large saw mill where they are destroying those beautiful cedars and other trees, those suggestive monuments to by-gone ages and converting them into lumber to be sent to Chicago, perhaps, that place devoid of all beauty or sense of poetry. Nor is this all. Only a short distance from the mill and connected with it by a wooden

railroad is a pier run out into the lake a thousand feet. How it mars the beauty of the fairy nook. It is as if some beautiful girl with a mouth to excite an irresistible desire for a kiss should all at once run out a tongue like an ant-eater. Where is Foscoro? Six miles north of Ahnapee (*Daily Milwaukee News* 1871e).

Although the article comes across as the impassioned opinion of a nature-lover, a case can be made that there is a deeper and more subversive intention underlying the florid and memorable prose. Though the article reads as a plea for conservation of the region's natural beauty on the surface level, it simultaneously lays out in detail every feature that would have excited the interest of readers looking to exploit that beauty. The article extols the size and quality of timber to be found there. It promotes the quality of Foscoro's soil and water. It mentions the pier and mill. There is even an offhand mention of a 'plat', suggesting the presence or expected presence of a true village rather than a mill complex. The article was published in a city where immigrants seeking farms and employment in the lumber industry disembarked by the shipload every day and told them exactly where to find that good land and employment. By mid-April, a dozen Norwegian families had relocated northward and more were on the way. The price of land at Foscoro jumped sharply upwards to \$5 per acre (just over \$124 per acre in modern currency) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871h).

Did the highly educated Foster and Coe put their legal minds to work and come up with a subliminal advertisement designed to capture the attention of readers far better than a pedestrian notice competing with others on the pages of Milwaukee's newspapers would have? The answer is lost to history, but it is clear that the article drew attention. The panegyric was reprinted in other newspapers, including the *Kewaunee Enterprise* in April, and caught the eye of a local resident identified as 'J'—almost certainly the sharp-penned John Whitaker—who went to see for himself. He provided his own take on the matter.

Editor Enterprise: ...only a short time ago it was described as the loveliest village that the waters of Lake Michigan kissed, and the home of fairies, &c. As your correspondent was about finding a home he naturally turned his footsteps in that direction, and arrived there safe and sound, but, alas, what a change we found upon a close inspection. We found lots of fairies, but they were of the species that live on blood and sing around your ears to pay for it. The loveliness of the place had all departed. It caused me to sigh, and while I write my heart swells with grief, and I shall have to lay aside my pen and go out and weep and howl, for the glory of Foscoro is passing away... 'J' (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871i).

It was a nice place to live, despite the mosquitoes. One hundred years later, a member of the Wisconsin Archaeological Society visited what was left of Foscoro investigating rumors of "a trading post" (Wells 1972). He soon realized that the supposed post was really a general store and observed that a hotel of some sort had once stood at the site. While surveying the property, he found artifacts dating back thousands of years. Like Kewaunee, Ahnapee, Sandy Bay, and other areas along the lakeshore, Foscoro was Native land. The original residents of the lakeshore returned repeatedly to the banks of Stoney Creek, living as forest and lake demanded. Foscoro was built where others had lived before.

In 1871, Foscoro's newest residents were only getting started. That summer, the first full season of shipping commenced. The year's totals were impressive. The mill sawed nearly a quarter of a million feet of lumber and timber. Nearly 27,000 cedar posts, over 16,000 ties, more than 2,400 telegraph poles, some 1,100 cords of bark, and 744 cords of wood were loaded on the long pier and shipped south (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872b).

When the Great Fire arrived in the autumn it burned right to the shoreline, but Foscoro does not feature prominently in the lists of losses. The lost port of Clay Banks, just two and a half miles to the north across the county line, was all but wiped out; only its pier withstood the flames (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871q). Given the devastation at Clay Banks, the panic at Ahnapee, and the desperate fights further south at Alaska and Grimm's piers, it is hard to see how Foscoro came out unharmed. And yet it did. Several years later, it was claimed that the forestlands immediately around the community were "unscathed by fire" (*Ahnapee Record* 1874p).

In that one instance Foscoro was lucky. It did not escape unscathed, however. The fire caught up with Foscoro in a more subtle way, after some time had passed. The removal of the tree cover from Kewaunee County's shores sped up runoff and the rate of evaporation. Streams that ran swift and clear turned sluggish as their headwaters dried. When heavy rains fell, they burst into sudden and destructive flood. The coastal streams swung between spring torrents like the one that delivered the *coup de grace* to Langworthy and anemic flows insufficient to power water mills. Droughty conditions did not help. Stoney Creek, which 'Jeannie' described as "bounding along" in a rush to get to Lake Michigan, was on the unanticipated verge of a change for the worse.

### ***Captain Fellows (1872–1875)***



**Figure 123: Captain C. L. Fellows (*Algoma Record* 1911c).**

Perhaps Foster, Coe, and Rowe saw it coming. They sold out. The complex brought them \$18,000 in 1872's currency, equivalent to nearly \$450,000 today. It may be that the trio decided they had made enough money speculating in real estate and easy timber and called it a day while profits were ready at hand. On the other hand, it is possible that they were outmaneuvered by their buyer—ship's captain and former Stoney Creek fisherman Charles Lewis Fellows (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1872l). As Boyd, et al. (2020:11) note, Fellows purchased considerable land around Foscoro in the years leading up to the sale and may have choked off the mill's supply of timber. He certainly didn't care for Foster, Coe, or Rowe, or their operation (*Door County Advocate* 1929).

Captain Fellows was a Yankee sailor. Later photos show him as a distinguished man with a head of snowy white hair and a mustache to match (figure 123). He walked with a limp (*Algoma Record* 1911c; *Algoma Record-Herald* 1925),

His family were early colonists of the southeastern Wisconsin coast. Fellows arrived in Racine in 1834, when he was only

seven years old. He ran away from home and became a cabin boy on the brig *Alleghany* and then rose up in the lumber fleet, becoming a ship's captain, part-owner of the schooner *Julia Ann*, and owner of the schooner *Whirlwind*. Lore has him captain the first ship to enter the Ahnapee River, the first to tie up to the later bridge pier there, and the first to carry cargo away (*Algoma Record* 1911c; *Racine Daily Journal* 1889a).

Capt. Fellows aspired to more than the sailing life, however. He enrolled in Bell's Commercial College in Chicago and graduated in 1856. The following year, he married wife Mary F. Yates. Son George was born to their union on a late August day in Racine in 1858. As Fellows' family grew, he put his hard-won education to use in a partnership with merchant David Young of Ahnapee. He moved northward to that town and opened a luxury hotel, which Mary and her father managed, and a general store (Boyd et al. 2020:11–13; *Door County Advocate* 1929; Western Historical 1881b:434). Fellows also turned his attention to lumbering. He knew something about it. Not only had he carried the products of Wisconsin's forests on his ships for years, but his father was an early lumberman in Racine (*Algoma Record* 1911c).

Fellows bought his timberlands, bought Foscoro, and set about completing the founders' vision. Whether or not he got the better end of the deal is unclear. Fellows was no Ed Bach. He had little interest in farming, and less in cheese. The mercantile business never captured his fancy, and he had no real connection to Stoney Creek beyond his early fishing days there. His focus was the sawmill. Just as he bought the complex, a panic rippled through the U. S. economy, and Fellows' financial health took a sudden and heavy turn towards bankruptcy. The blow, and Fellows' effort to recover from it, was later described as a "long and hard pull" (*Door County Advocate* 1929).

Fellows installed a Canadian mill worker from Ahnapee named Hugh Acker in the manager's office and got the shingle mill running (Western Historical Co. 1881b:434). His first season's shipping began in May 1873. By September, fifty vessels had loaded at the Foscoro pier (*Ahnapee Record* 1873c). Exports ballooned to 1.4 million shingles, 444,000 board feet of lumber, 44,385 cedar posts, 4,537 railroad ties, 2,473 cords of wood, 1,762 poles of various sizes, 935 cords of bark, and 230 cords of slab wood.

These items filled the holds and decks of 62 schooners (*Ahnapee Record* 1873g). The *Door County Advocate* noted that more cargo shipped from Foscoro in the first half of the season than any other location north of Ahnapee (*Door County Advocate* 1873a).

Hugh Acker wasn't mill manager for long. He stepped down and opened Foscoro House, a combination hotel, dance hall, and saloon (*Ahnapee Record* 1874d, 1873e; Western Historical Co. 1881b:434) (Figure 124). This was another point of divergence between Bach's dry Carlton and Foscoro. Besides the saloon, Foscoro also offered legal services. A justice of the peace was apparently in residence. In March 1874, a man living at or near the Silver Creek pier "objected to the doings of several of his neighbors" and went after them with an axe. He was arrested and brought to Foscoro for trial (*Ahnapee Record* 1874f).



Figure 124: Advertisement for Foscoro House (*Ahnapee Record* 1874d).

Other than the opening of Foscoro House, the main incident of note that year was the start of construction of the feed and grist mill (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874n, 1874p). Minor incidents occurred as well. Wildfires ran through the woods, burning up a fair amount of stockpiled goods on Fellows' timberlands (*Door County Advocate* 1874). A worker named Frank Adelsbach was struck by a falling tree while peeling tanning bark for Fellows in late July. It broke his leg (*Ahnapee Record* 1874l). A shipment of goods for the store arrived in late September, and additional cargoes of boots, shoes, and hardware came in later by steamer (*Ahnapee Record* 1874n, 1874o).

Foscoro shipped 64 more cargoes in 1874. Schooners calling at the pier loaded more than 69,000 cedar posts, over 14,000 railroad ties, more than 2,780 cords of wood, 1,372 cords of tanning bark, just over 150,000 board feet of hardwood lumber, over 1.8 million shingles, and 3,850 of maple 'pump logs' (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1874r). The timber products were taken south to Chicago, Racine, and Milwaukee, on ships such as the scows *Forest*, *Venture*, and *Ella Doak*, and the schooner *M. McVea* (*Ahnapee Record* 1874j).

Despite the impressive numbers, Foscoro's future was uncertain. Captain Fellows realized that he had bitten off more than he could chew and put the complex up for sale.

Property For Sale...also the property known as Foscoro situated on lot 2 sec 6 town 25 range 26 at the mouth of Stony Creek consisting of saw mill, bridge pier, and store, six dwellings and two barns all built three years ago, the pier is 850 feet long with eleven feet water at the end and seven feet back 500 feet, the mill is run by water power with 24 feet head and at a small expense can be made to have plenty of power the whole year. It has a Leffel wheel that gives over ninety horse power...Will sell the whole or ½ interest in above mentioned property on easy terms; will give satisfactory reasons for selling to parties with capital; this is a chance to invest seldom met with as without any exception it is the best and most convenient property on the west shore of Lake Michigan for doing a lumber, wood, post, tie and bark business. It will take \$40,000 worth of merchandise per year to supply the population tributary to it. The timber land is of the best quality and has never been injured by fire. Good title given. For particulars, address C. L. Fellows, Foscoro, Kewaunee Co., Wis. (*Ahnapee Record* 1874p).

Just what was going through Fellows' mind is unclear. Perhaps he put his education from Bell's Business College to use and realized he wasn't up to the task of financing the rapidly growing complex by himself—particularly the \$40,000 worth of merchandise needed to keep the store and workers supplied. That figure translates to a modern expenditure of over a million dollars per year. Fellows attempted to offload the property as Foster, Coe, and Rowe had done or at least find a partner to share the costs with. His notice indicated that he would give "satisfactory reasons" for selling to any serious buyers, which gives the impression that the difficulties were on his end rather than any fault with the property. There were no takers. Fellows retained ownership through the next year, while the little village continued to grow.

In December of 1874, a blacksmith shop opened. The new smith set to work with a team of "good workmen", taking care of the heavy workload that the complex required (*Ahnapee Record* 1874r).



The makeup of the settlement changed again in early 1875. George D. Fellows, Captain Fellow's oldest son, had been studying in Racine but decided not to continue there and returned home (*Ahnapee Record* 1875a). A couple of weeks later, Hugh Acker announced that he was moving to Casco to work at the Fay & Co. mill. He leased Foscoro House to William L. Nelson in his absence (*Ahnapee Record* 1875c, 1875e).

Fellows advertised for more hauling teams in March 1875 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875i). The mill needed to be fed with timber. It was running "full blast" (*Ahnapee Record* 1875f), along with the grist mill (*Door County Expositor* 1875). More timber was coming in than ever before (*Door County Advocate* 1875b). When Fellows' teams were assembled, he sent them into the timberlands looking for pine. They pulled in half-a-million board feet of it. "There is more of it in the forests in that vicinity" said the *Enterprise*, "though not a large amount" (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875j).

Shipping for the 1875 season started in April with the arrival of the schooner *Mary Booth*, contracted by Fellows to carry for them that year (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875l). The *Mary Booth* wasn't the only ship coming to call. The schooners *Mt. Vernon* and *Two Kitties* carried ties to Chicago (*Ahnapee Record* 1875g). The scow *Forest* made multiple trips to Racine with cedar posts, ties, and cordwood (*Ahnapee Record* 1875h, 1875i; *Racine County Argus* 1875) and returned with 'sundries' (*Racine Journal* 1875). The schooner *Hinsdale* took lumber to Ahnapee to build a new granary for Captain Fellows and a business partner (*Ahnapee Record* 1875u)—a reminder that he retained business interests in the little city. The *Lady Ellen* carried lumber to Ahnapee and the Goodrich steamers stopped by to refuel their boilers (*Ahnapee Record* 1875v).

All told, the ships that visited Foscoro in 1875 sailed away with 1.5 million shingles, 441,000 feet of lumber, over half a million cedar posts, more than 7,700 railroad ties, nearly 2000 cords of wood, over 1,100 cords of bark, and 3,700 feet of pump logs (*Ahnapee Record* 1876a). Some of the wood stayed in Kewaunee County. Captain Fellows contributed a raft of timber to Ahnapee for their harbor improvements (*Ahnapee Record* 1875p). Other Ahnapee dealers and lumbermen used Foscoro pier as well. The schooners *C. Harrison* and *W. H. Nelson* loaded for ship Captain and fisherman John McDonald and another man named R. C. Crawford, respectively (*Ahnapee Record* 1875i). The *Little Bell* and *St. Lawrence* loaded for Ahnapee dealers Fax & Bro. (*Ahnapee Record* 1875k, 1875l).

Foscoro's other appearances in the press in 1875 provide glimpses of the lumber port's growth. The population rose to the point where a school was necessary. That February, it caught fire and sent the students into a "lively tussel" before the blaze was extinguished (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875f). There were dangers on every hand for the residents, young and old. Disaster was averted in April when a workman noted a small trickle of water flowing down the mill dam. He sounded the alarm, and the dam was quickly reinforced (*Ahnapee Record* 1875g). The three-year-old son of a 'Mr. Hanson', playing in the mill yard, was carried home with a dislocated hip and broken ankle. Neither parent could explain what happened (*Ahnapee Record* 1875q).

Mid-summer of 1875 brought news of the return of the fishing industry to Foscoro. H. Harkins, former owner of the property, returned in company with partner A. C. Eveland and installed a pound net offshore. Pound nets eventually extended up and down the Lake Michigan coastline, and a parallel 'fishing boom' rose up as the lumber boom was fading. Arrays of nets were fastened to



Figure 125: Foscoro on the 1876 plat map of Kewaunee County. Note position of store building over the Door County line (J. Knauber & Co. 1876).

wooden stakes pounded into the lake bottom. Periodically, fishermen emptied the nets and hauled their catches to market (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875m). Fellows, sensing a trend, announced that he had pounded net poles for sale (*Ahnapee Record* 1875m). Foscoro even had a small ship-building industry. Captain John McDonald set about building a fishing boat at Foscoro that summer (*Ahnapee Record* 1875n). Fellows investigated yet another potential source of income. He had State Geologist T. C. Chamberlin assess a spring on his land. Chamberlin reported that the water had “very valuable medicinal properties” (*Ahnapee Record* 1875r), but Fellows never followed up on the matter.

When 1875 came to an end, the property was still for sale.

### ***Foscoro in 1875***

The 1876 plat map captures a fuller glimpse of Foscoro than any of the other lost coastal communities of Kewaunee County (J. Knauber & Co. 1876) (Figure 125). Three roads converge on the village and pier. The lakeshore road passes over Stoney Creek, along a similar line to today’s County Highway ‘U’. Another road extended due north towards the lakeshore road from the pier, passing over a second bridge over Stoney Creek. A third road ran west from the pier to join the lakeshore road south of Stoney Creek. The lakeshore road and the two pier roads formed an acute triangle with a base south of the creek and an apex north of it. The saw and grist mill were situated on the south bank of Stoney Creek within this triangle.

The store was at the north end of the complex over the county line. It is literally off the map on the 1876 plat, just a lonely black square in the empty space bordering Kewaunee County. A later plat map of Door County pinpoints a store location on the east side of the lakeshore road, north of the community's school, which was located on the Kewaunee County side of the line just north of Stony Creek (Randall & Williams 1899). Whether this is the location of the original store cannot be confirmed, since a second store was built later. Foscoro House stands on the southwest corner of the intersection of the lakeshore road and the forerunner of modern Kennedy Drive on the south end of the complex.

Worker's houses line up on the west side of the lakeshore road south of Stony Creek. A final building is located on the east side of the lakeshore road on the south side of the southern pier road. The surrounding land, comprising the entire northeastern Quarter of Section 6 and the north half of the southeastern Quarter is labeled with the name of Captain Fellows. His holdings extended inland along Stony Creek for at least four miles.

Despite this detail, as with the other pier communities the 1876 plat map undersells Foscoro. The sale notice specifies that Decker owned six worker's houses in the community, along with two barns. George Fellows, eldest son of Captain Fellows, recalled a "huge" boarding house (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1925). Foscoro certainly had the requisite service buildings as well. Some of these may have been situated in Door County and hence do not appear on the Kewaunee plat. The complex also included the dam and mill pond. Offshore were Harkins' and Eveland's pound nets.

### ***O be Joyful (1876–1880)***

In 1876, almost a hundred cargoes shipped from Foscoro (*Ahnapee Record* 1877b). The season's totals, however, suggest that production at the port was waning. The ships left Foscoro with only 156,000 shingles, 103,000 board feet of lumber, 30,291 cedar posts, 11,200 railroad ties, 2,263 cords of wood, and 581 cords of bark (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877e). Some of those cargoes may have been carried on the scow *Crazy Horse*, built for Captain Fellows by Captain Henry Harkins. The new ship was able to carry up to 100 cords of bark or 70 cords of wood and was said to be "the best one ever put on the river" (*Ahnapee Record* 1876d). The *Crazy Horse*, which vanishes from the historic record immediately after this point, was one of the first ships associated with the Foscoro complex. It would not be the last.

In March of 1877, Capt. C. L. Fellows' brother Captain Harrison Fellows bought the scow *Forest*, no stranger to Foscoro's shores (*Ahnapee Record* 1877c; 1877i). The scow *Success* picked up loads of wood that year as well (*Ahnapee Record* 1877h), and the scows *Ramedary* and *Lady Ellen* and schooners *Conquest*, *Hannah Etty*, and *W. H. Hindsdale* paid calls (*Ahnapee Record* 1877f; 1877j; 1877g). Tanning bark was a hot commodity that year. Thirty-seven separate loads came into the Foscoro complex on a single day in June, demonstrating the scope of the bark trade (*Door County Advocate* 1877a). Fellows bought salvage rights to the wreck of the *Daisy*, which came ashore at Foscoro that September (*Ahnapee Record* 1876g).

Late in 1877, the sale ads vanished from the newspapers. A buyer stepped forward to take on 50% interest in the business. Captain Fellows announced that he was forming a co-partnership with Franz Swaty and son Wlastimil Swaty to form the firm F. Swaty & Co. The elder Swaty was one

of the leading merchants of Ahnapee and moved in elevated financial circles. His career, both before and after coming to Kewaunee County, was wide-ranging, to say the least. Swaty worked in a cotton factory as a young man, farmed in Manitowoc County for several years after his arrival in Wisconsin in 1855, and opened a store in Ahnapee in 1864. The store did very well, and the elder Swaty opened a branch store in Forestville, west of Foscoro. Swaty turned the stores over to his college-educated son Wlastimil while he devoted his attention to his other interests. The elder Swaty partnered with W. Stransky to build the Ahnapee brewery, with C. G. Boalt to set up Ahnapee's grist mill and opened the area's first brickyard (*Western Historical* 1881b:435).

Foscoro provided Swaty & Son with an opportunity to expand yet again, and they set up their second branch store there. It was "stocked with such goods as the requirements of the people and necessity demand" (*Ahnapee Record* 1877n). The *Menominee* brought the store's contents north in her hold and dropped the material off at Ahnapee (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877cc). So much merchandise was stuffed into temporary storage in the Ahnapee store that the *Door County Advocate* joshed that the sides of the building were bowing out. They were "ready to supply the whole country," said the *Advocate* (*Door County Advocate* 1877b).

Since Fellows—at the head of a rapidly growing family—was staying, he made the decision to relocate his wife and children from Ahnapee to Stoney Creek. First, however, they needed a home. He decided they needed a very, very good home, and set about making it so:

Charley Fellows is erecting a fine residence in Foscoro, the dimensions of which are 40 x 44 feet with 20 feet posts. There are to be 22 windows and as many doors. The shape of the roof is rather peculiar, there being four different pitches to it. Charley has rather peculiar ideas about a house, but we believe it will look well when completed (*Ahnapee Record* 1877i).

Workmen tackled improvements to Stony Creek as well. A new dam was raised up, and the mill's connection to the mill pond was improved. The upgrades included a slide, bull-wheel, and log turner, which conveyed logs directly up into the mill from the mill pond. The shingle machine was lifted up "to a more convenient position" (*Ahnapee Record* 1877n). In mid-December 1877, a Manitowoc tombstone dealer traveled up to Foscoro to help install a new "turbine water wheel" in the mill (possibly a replacement Leffel wheel) (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1877ff). For the second time, Foscoro's owners chose water power over steam.

There were the usual minor incidents in 1877. Matt Broww, descending from the *Lady Ellen* onto Foscoro Pier, missed his step and pitched into Lake Michigan "satchel and all". The crew of the *Lady Ellen* pulled him out of the drink (*Ahnapee Record* 1877k). Acker's saloon ensured that Broww wasn't the only stumble-footed person in Foscoro.

About fourteen of the Sturgeon Bay Canal laborers, on their way to Chicago, stopped at Hugh Acker's in Foscoro, last Thursday night and made themselves pretty free about the premises as well as getting pretty well "set up". A purse of money was lost which caused a little disturbance in the ranks, and as they arrived in Ahnapee on Friday it culminated in a knock-down which was brought on by the effects of too much of the 'O be joyful'. (*Ahnapee Record* 1877m).

Construction of the Fellow's family's new home continued through the winter and wrapped up early in the spring of 1878. C. L. Fellows and family moved north to Foscoro.

The house is said to be finely finished and approaches the palatial in its proportions—containing 31 apartments. A new store [Figure 126], new mill-dam, improvements in the mill, and a general air of thrift and gain that prevail are evidence of steady progress and development manifest not here alone, but at every point on the lake shore (*Ahnapee Record* 1878b).

A photograph of the home held in a private collection and reprinted in Boyd et al. (2020:17) shows a lovely three-story gabled-ell home with dormer windows, a bay window on the first floor, and a picket fence.

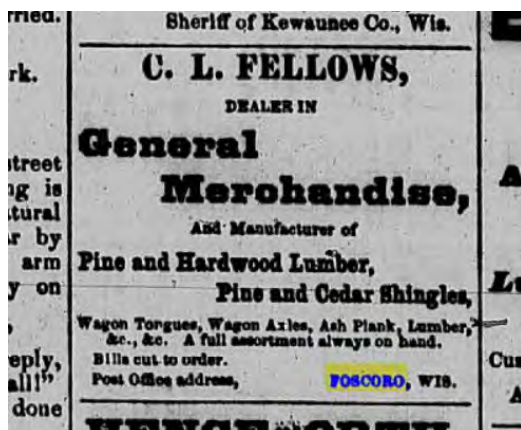


Figure 126: Advertisement for Fellows' store (*Ahnapee Record* 1878g).

Reporters with the *Record* visited Foscoro in May 1878. They came away noting that Captain Fellows was “fully occupied” with running the saw and shingle mills. The road was straightened, and C. B. Post built a new schoolhouse for the community (*Ahnapee Record* 1878d, 1878f). Fellows received State sanction to dredge out Stoney Creek that year. A dozen workmen and two teams of horses were devoted to the task of clearing out debris and other obstacles (*Door County Advocate* 1879e). By October, the creek flowed freely along a four-mile stretch from Fellow's timberlands to his mill pond. Before long, Fellows was watching logs floating serenely downstream and into his mill (*Ahnapee Record* 1878i). The lumber that came out of the mill was picked up by various schooners and scows, including the *Charlotte Roab*, which carried 5,400 ties to Chicago,

and the *Hawkins*, which carried 7,000 posts to Chicago. The *Forest*, owned by Capt. Fellows' brother Harrison Fellows, hauled wood and bark to Racine. Captain C. L. Fellows, not to be outdone, bought the schooner *Sea Star* that year and put it to work carrying slab wood (*Ahnapee Record* 1878c; *Racine Journal* 1878).

That August, the downside of raising a family in an active mill complex was brought to the attention of Charles and Mary Fellows in a definite way. By then, the Fellows household included sons George (age 20), Fred (17), Lewis (14), Frank (8), William (3), and daughter Edith (12). Fred, assisting in the mill, got one of his feet in the way of a log carriage and lost two toes. “Fred now thinks the carriage is invincible and will no more attempt to turn its course with his feet,” reported the Algoma papers (*Ahnapee Record* 1878h). It was a foreshadowing of far worse things to come for the Fellows family.

Excitement of another sort swept through the town in late November 1878, when the sound of a gunshot echoed in the night. On Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, two boozy travelers walked through the hotel's doors and settled in to drink and gamble. Knud Owneson and John Swinson—partners in a





Figure 127: Workmen in a northern Wisconsin saloon, ca. 1892. Wisconsin Historic Image 55795.

fishing business up at Clay Banks—were on their way home. Before they left Ahnapee, they took the trouble to supply themselves with strong spirits and indulged while on the road. By the time they reached Foscoro, they were three sheets to the wind and needed resupply.

The card game did not go in Owneson's favor. He set to arguing with Swinson and grew more and more heated and then pulled a knife. The equally intoxicated Swinson, speaking calmly and as carefully as it was possible for him to do, did his sozzled best to de-escalate. At first, it seemed as though Owneson was calming down, but then he stood up and went for Swinson, knife in hand, blocking Swinson's route of escape. Swinson had a gun under his coat. He drew and fired (*Ahnapee Record* 1878j; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878w).

Owneson went down with a bullet in his chest and lay where he fell "till morning". He was still alive. Swinson drank a while longer and then passed out. When he came to with the daylight, he saw what he had done and called for a doctor. Swinson was arrested and shipped to Ahnapee to stand trial. Acker, who had taken back Foscoro House, and Owneson were called as witnesses. Owneson openly accepted that he was at fault (*Algoma Record* 1878i). Swinson was charged with assault to commit bodily harm. Then Owneson died. Community feeling was that Swinson shouldn't be blamed and that Owneson had brought it on himself (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1878x). As the *Door County Advocate* (1878b) put it, Swinson "had to either shoot the other man or submit to being carved himself". The jury agreed. Swinson was acquitted in April of 1879 (*Ahnapee Record* 1879c).

## ***Foscoro in 1879***

The following year, mill worker ‘Jensen’ lost three fingers and mangled the rest on one hand running the edger in the sawmill (*Door County Advocate* 1879d). Despite the accident, prospects for the mill were good. 1879 began with Fellows “getting more wood stuff...than he wants” (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879d). The mill started up in March, and shipping started almost immediately afterwards (*Door County Advocate* 1879b). Despite its relatively recent overhauls, the mill needed more maintenance and Captain Fellows headed south to Chicago to pick up the necessary items (*Ahnapee Record* 1879a). Late in the month wildfires started up in the forests. Foscoro might have escaped the Great Fire of 1871, but its luck had run out by 1879. The fire swept into the community and incinerated four barns and one of the workmen’s houses (*Door County Advocate* 1879c). The price of shingles dropped so low that autumn that it didn’t make sense to make them anymore. Instead, Fellows’ stockpiled cedar was cut into railroad ties; the price for those remained high (*Door County Advocate* 1879g).

Brother Captain Harrison Fellows, by that point half of lumber and coal dealers Cogswell & Fellows of Racine, came for a visit in the fall (*Ahnapee Record* 1879d). Son George Fellows was on his way back as well. The younger Fellows shared a passenger coach with a female passenger on the leg between Ahnapee and Foscoro. An axle shattered and both passengers went tumbling. Fellows escaped with a broken ankle, and the woman extricated herself with only bruises (*Ahnapee Record* 1879g). When George hobbled into the family home at Foscoro to be fussed over by his parents, he limped into a new phase of his life. Captain C. L. Fellows needed a break. In December 1879, Captain Fellows turned the Foscoro mill complex over to his son (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879q).

George was only 13 when his father removed his family to Foscoro and built his mansion along Stoney Creek. He spent his teenage years either in the bustle of the mill complex or at school in Racine and Chicago. He put in his time working at the mill. In 1879, he turned 21. His father thought he was ready. He inherited a working mill complex with all of its standard components, with the added benefits of inland riverine transport and upgraded mill machinery. Management of the store, meanwhile, fell to F. Swaty & Son, who restocked it with new goods and installed H. Overbeck, Jr. as manager. The Swatys also announced that they intended to buy and sell wood (*Ahnapee Record* 1879h).

This latter note raises the question of how the lumber business was divided at Foscoro, how Swaty & Co. interfaced with Swaty & Son, and the extent to which the partners stepped on each other’s toes. Foscoro’s business model may have resembled Sandy Bay. There, McNally handled the sawmill while Waegli took care of everything else. A similar division of labor seems to have been planned at Foscoro. The initial announcement implied that Swaty & Son would handle the pier store and timber dealership. This presumably left Fellows in charge of the mill, pier, and shipping. However, within the next year or so Fellows purchased timber goods himself and the 1882 Wisconsin Gazetteer lists two stores at Foscoro: one owned by Fellows and another by Swaty & Son (Hogg & Wright Co. 1882:180).

Business models aside, the 1880 manufacturing and agricultural schedules of the U. S. Census capture a partial snapshot of Fellow’s holdings that year (the census year for 1880 ended in June,

and yearly totals were based on the prior year's activity). In the mill, an upgraded 106-horsepower Leffel wheel powered a single circle saw. It was tended to by a workforce of 10 adult men and two women or boys. The mill ran full time for five months, part time for five more months, and spent the final two months idle. Fellows invested \$5,000 in the mill in 1879 (around \$149,000 in modern currency) and paid out \$3,000 in wages (just over \$90,000 today). The logs stocked up in the mill yards and the equipment in the mill were valued at \$11,600 (over \$345,000 today). Fellows reported that his mill sent out 1.5 million feet of lumber and 7.5 million shingles, together appraised at \$17,000 (over \$500,000 in modern value). Fellows also told the census taker that he relied on others (likely his brother) to ship part of his goods but brought in all of his own logs (United States Census 1880).

Fellows held a substantial amount of farmland, including seventy acres under cultivation and four hundred acres of timberland in addition to pasturage. The farm was worth \$3,000 (another \$90,000 in modern value), and Fellows owned \$1,200 worth of livestock (over \$36,000 today): 14 horses, 31 sheep, and sufficient dairy cows to make 100 pounds of butter. 1879's harvest comprised 40 tons of hay, 72 bushels of barley, 60 bushels of corn, 203 bushels of oats, 72 bushels of wheat, and 300 bushels of potatoes. Very surprisingly, Fellows claimed that no cords of wood were cut from his farm holdings, though he sold \$700 worth of timber products from the farm (over \$21,000 in modern currency). The income earned by selling the timber exactly equaled the wages Fellows paid to his farmhands that year.

Looking at just the numbers for the mill and farm, Fellows' assets and gross profits totaled \$33,500 in 1879, equivalent to just over a million dollars today. His expenditures totaled \$8,700 (approximately \$265,400 in modern currency), giving him a gross profit—theoretically—of \$24,800, or over \$750,000 in modern cash. The true picture, of course, would have been far more complicated. He had business interests in Ahnapee. He was probably making some money from pierage fees when others loaded and dropped off at the pier. He certainly was saving money by using the *Forest* and *Sea Star* to ship his goods, though his brother likely took a cut of the proceeds. The pier, mill, schooner *Sea Star*, and other holdings required maintenance. Workers not associated with the farm and mill required pay. Farmers that brought in shingles, ties, and posts to sell expected to be paid for their goods. Fellows lost one workman's house and four barns to the 1879 wildfire. Finally, as later legal woes testify, Fellows was caught in an intricate financial web, with multiple levels of mortgage holders, backers, clients, and customers, all fighting to ensure that their interests were met.

1879 was a decent year for lumber and shingle production at Foscoro. Even so, when the profits are weighed against known and presumed expenditures, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Fellows' balance sheets danced just ahead of financial disaster. If any single component of the system failed—if farmers failed to bring in posts and ties, if the pier was badly damaged, if backers called in too many chips, or if the mill didn't run—the ink in the account columns switched from black to red. There was a lot of red in Foscoro's future.

### ***Ravages of Wind and Lake (1880-1885)***

When the census taker rode away from Foscoro, he left a community on the precipice behind him. The following years were anything but smooth. It was as if a curse fell upon the little port. Almost

every year brought one or more disasters—many extraordinarily costly. Blacksmith C. B. Post kicked things off when he fell through the ice on the mill pond in early February 1880 and very nearly drowned. He sank straight to the bottom before bouncing back up. By chance, his ascent brought him right back to the hole he made going in and others pulled him to safety. “It must be delightful to take a cold water bath these clear and piercing cold mornings”, said the *Record* (*Ahnapee Record* 1880b). Measles arrived in Foscoro not long afterwards. It spread through the lakeside community, killing at least one small child. Fred Fellows came down with it and nearly died (*Ahnapee Record* 1880c).

Captain Laurie piloted the schooner *Belle Laurie* to Foscoro to load with wood in late March, starting off the year’s maritime trade (*Ahnapee Record* 1880d). The schooner *Mocking Bird* sailed up to the pier in early April and took on a cargo of 4,600 ties (*Ahnapee Record* 1880e). When her captain attempted to turn south, she drifted and wound up on the beach. The ties stacked on her decks were thrown into the surf to lighten her. After the vessel refloated, her Captain steered her back to the pier while men picked their way through the tangle of ties washed up on the beach and hauled them laboriously back onto the pier to load a second time (*Ahnapee Record* 1880f).

A total of eight cargoes loaded and departed before the end of the first week in May of 1880, carrying 21,000 ties, 5,000 posts, and 75 cords of wood (*Door County Advocate* 1880a). Shortly afterwards a spring flood destroyed the mill dam. The millpond and its contents spilled into Lake Michigan. The upgraded mill relied on the pond. Without it, the mill’s machinery couldn’t draw logs and the Leffel wheel wouldn’t turn. Damages to the mill dam alone totaled nearly \$30,000 in modern currency (*Ahnapee Record* 1880i). In reality, the financial loss was far, far worse. The mill—which produced the bulk of Foscoro’s income and supported many of its workers—was incapacitated for over a year (*Ahnapee Record* 1881s).

Meanwhile, Captain Fellows was on the hook for a rebuild of the scow *Sea Star*. By 1880, the scow had carried goods for Fellows for two years, shuttling between Ahnapee and Chicago. The vessel was old and worn to the point that it was uninsurable, forcing Fellows to rebuild and bring it up to at least minimum standards (Boyd et al. 2020:100). In July 1880, Fellows sent a load of lumber to Ahnapee to be used as raw material for the refit and lengthening of her hull (*Ahnapee Record* 1880o). The scow was enlarged by forty feet in length and two feet in height (*Ahnapee Record* 1879e). She was relaunched into Lake Michigan and rigged in late August, and before long hauled posts, cedar shingles, and lumber for Swaty & Son (*Ahnapee Record* 1880q, 1880r).

In theory, vessel ownership should have helped keep costs down. The problem was that the *Sea Star* had her own share of bad luck to boast of. In the years between her launching in the 1850s and when Fellows took ownership of her, lightning fractured her foremast, she ran onto the beach twice, grounded, capsized, lost another foremast, collided with another ship, and suffered various other accidents (Boyd et al. 2020:100; Metzler 2023; wisconsinshipwrecks.org).

The *Sea Star* was idle, and so was the mill. The pier yards, however, were still full of products ready to ship. Foscoro shipped rougher timber products purchased from the surrounding countryside or cut by Fellows’ employees. The schooner *Silver Cloud* loaded 3,000 ties (*Ahnapee Record* 1880i). The schooner *Honest John* cleared the pier with 90 cords of wood (*Ahnapee Record* 1880j). The schooner *Driver* picked up 6,500 nine-foot posts (*Ahnapee Record* 1880k).

The scow *South Side* departed with 155 cords of tanning bark and the schooner *Stevens* took on 2,000 ties (*Ahnapee Record* 1880n). The *Stevens* returned later for 60 cords of bark and the schooner *Arden* loaded 2,000 posts and 250,000 shingles (*Ahnapee Record* 1880p). The *Sea Star* called again to pick up 63 cords of wood, 1,200 posts, and 10 cords of bark (*Ahnapee Record* 1880t).

In the fall of 1880, the gales of November came early. That October, the *Ahnapee Record* breathlessly described weather “Such as was Never Experienced on the Lake.” The schooner *Reciprocity* tried to ride out the tempest at anchor off Two Rivers. The ship tossed and heaved in the gale, then the vessel took on water and the anchor chain parted. The *Reciprocity*’s desperate crew piled into the yawl and rowed for shore. They made it safely to Two Creeks pier, but the *Reciprocity* was carried further north, lodged in the shallows at Foscoro, and broke up (*Ahnapee Record* 1880u; *Door County Advocate* 1880c). One of the ships that came to salvage her was the renovated *Sea Star* (Boyd et al. 2020:100).

The end of 1880s shipping season was less than a month away, and it came with more foul weather. The scow *Lady Ellen*, owned and captained by John McDonald, was caught at pier at Foscoro when conditions soured again. Captain McDonald, one of the community’s regular customers/shippers, made the rough decision to cut her loose to save her. She fetched up on the beach, albeit temporarily (*Ahnapee Record* 1880v; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880m). By the time the *Lady Ellen* was pulled loose, it was too late for her to sail to her home port. She wintered at Foscoro.

George Fellows turned his back on the mess. His year in charge of the mill had been a horrible one. An opportunity presented itself in Racine and he took it. He left Foscoro in January 1881 for a position in the Mitchell-Lewis Wagon Works (*Ahnapee Record* 1881b). George married Lucy Morey in Milwaukee that October and began his own family. He did not return to Foscoro for more than a visit for some time (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1933b). Captain Fellows stepped back into the role of mill manager.

Life was busy. The winter of 1880–1881 brought a blanket of snow that was perfect for timber transport. Lumbermen and farmers moved goods to the coastline “to an extent never before known.”

Acres of these products cover the grounds at Clay Banks, Foscoro, and Ahnapee, while every thoroughfare leading toward the lake shore is crowded with sleighs bearing additional contributions to the already immense harvest. When we consider the limited area that yields this supply, and the amount obtained therefrom in former seasons, we cannot resist the conviction that the beginning of the end is not far distant...From Mr. C. L. Fellows, of Foscoro, we learn that he is not only purchasing all that is offered, but he has nine men in the woods who are likely to produce 10,000 ties and 5,000 posts...as Mr. Fellows remarked, “ties are just climbing into market” and Foscoro is as busy as though it contained inhabitants enough to entitle it to a city charter...(Ahnapee Record 1881d).



Captain Fellow's hard work did not go unnoticed. The family (and in particular Fellow's several teenage sons) had a great many friends who wished to give the residents of the big house on Stoney Creek some fun. Plans were laid in secret in the deep of the winter. Messages flew back and forth along the telegraph line between Ahnapee and Kewaunee. The telegraph in the Western Union office at Foscoro clicked in time with those missives, as did the one in Carlton, and at the other surviving port communities. The Bach family and clerks at Carlton were not the only pier operators to realize the benefits of eavesdropping on the telegraph line. The staff at Fellows' store learned the lesson as well, and that winter they delivered information of more immediate use to their employer than ship arrivals in Sturgeon Bay or grain prices in Chicago.

Seventy of "Ahnapee's belles and beaux" descended on Foscoro in what was supposed to have been a surprise party. They were greeted by a family who knew full well about the 'surprise' and had used the warning to prepare, right down to a midnight oyster dinner (*Ahnapee Record* 1881c; 1881d). From there, the festivities only picked up steam. The large house provided ample room to accommodate the guests. There was dancing and "similar diversions". When the partygoers turned their sleighs homeward in the dark and frigid wee hours of the morning, the hilarity continued. The roads were drifted over and the driving was as unsteady as the drivers.

There were four capsizes on the road, as far as heard from, but the returns are not all in yet. Several of the girls got a little more than their fair share of squeezing in consequence of these turnovers, but did not otherwise suffer. It is estimated that when the snow disappears something less than a cord of hair-pins will be found on the road, and until they are raked up it will be dangerous for barefooted children to travel on that highway (*Ahnapee Record* 1881d).

More snow followed. In March 1881, a three-day spring blizzard hovered over the region and added to the snowdrifts. Snow piled up in Foscoro and on the pier, blanketed the decks of the trapped *Lady Ellen* at Foscoro and the *Sea Star* sleeping in winter quarters at Ahnapee, and buried the pier yards. When it was over, the timberlands sat still and silent under five feet of snowpack. Ahnapee woke to a glacial landscape:

...when the storm ceased people on the north side of streets running from east to west were unable to see the buildings on the opposite side, so great were the snow drifts. In some places they reached to the top of buildings. In this sense it was no better in the country. Every street in the city and every road in the country was filled with snow to the top of fences, and in many places it was even deeper. People walk over the tops of fences and large fruit trees and don't think anything about the matter (*Ahnapee Record* 1881e).

Travelers on the lakeshore road abandoned their sleighs in Foscoro and tried walking out with their horses. Foscoro's mail carriers were stranded (*Ahnapee Record* 1881e). The same winds that delivered the snow broke up the lake ice, heralding the start of the shipping season. Unfortunately, the shattered ice tumbled down the coastline with the gale, sweeping away sections of Foscoro pier and the pier at Clay Banks. Pre-staged shipments piled on the piers spilled into Lake Michigan, adding to the cost of the disaster. Captain Fellows repaired the pier as quickly as possible. The mill was still sidelined, and his recent financial losses had to have been on his mind. He opted for a new

and cheaper method that didn't require a pile driver or specialized labor. The piles were set in position and allowed to sink down under the pier's own weight (*Ahnapee Record* 1881f; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881g).

The roads were nearly impassable. When the snowdrifts that blocked progress melted away, muck and flooding kept traffic tied up. John Acker managed to get a load of feed up to Foscoro from Kewaunee, an event impressive enough to make the newspapers (*Ahnapee Record* 1881f). Captain A. Schuenemann of the *Sea Star* foresaw the possibility of a melt-water flood on the Ahnapee River and sailed her out of Ahnapee harbor as soon as possible. The *Sea Star* took a load of maple to Milwaukee (*Door County Advocate* 1881a). The *Lady Ellen* launched from Foscoro in April after her forced winter's stay. She was sold and taken to a new home port in Manitowoc for repair and repainting. When the *Lady Ellen* arrived and work began, her spar fell off and the foremast was found to have nearly rotted through (*Ahnapee Record* 1881i; Metzler 2023).

The end of April brought the floods that Capt. Schuenemann was worried about. This time the mill pond at Foscoro held, but the bridge on the lakeshore road washed away. Clay Banks, the pier community to the north, took the hardest hit. They lost their bridge as well, along with 40,000 shingles. The Clay Banks sawmill was badly damaged, and its foundations were undermined (*Door County Advocate* 1881c).

The lake, free of ice, was the main means of transport. The "acres" of stockpiled goods at Foscoro's piers started moving south. The mill was still shut down, so the goods were limited to cordwood, railroad ties, and other products that didn't require milling. The *J. H. Stevens* picked up 50 cords of wood in mid-April (*Ahnapee Record* 1881i). The *Mary R. Ann* took 18 cords to Sheboygan later in the month (*Ahnapee Record* 1881j). The *Gessine*, *Sea Star*, and *Hawkins* loaded their holds and decks with over 10,000 railroad ties (collectively) in early May (*Ahnapee Record* 1881l). The tug *Two Davids* carried freight from Ahnapee to Foscoro (*Ahnapee Record* 1881m).

By this point, in the more southerly portions of Kewaunee County, many of the pier communities were struggling or shutting down. Foscoro was still doing a decent trade and things seemed to be improving. Fellows and the Swatys felt comfortable enough to expand their operations. The pier at Clay Banks was owned by one William Brown of Chicago and leased to F. Paarman, but Paarman's lease was up. W. Swaty and Captain Fellows jointly bought the Clay Banks pier in September (*Ahnapee Record* 1881q) (Figure 128). The Foscoro sawmill started back up not long afterwards, ending its prolonged outage (*Ahnapee Record* 1881s). The partners reorganized their



Figure 128: Advertisement for Swaty & Fellows (*Door County Advocate* 1882a).

firm and adopted a new name: Swaty & Fellows. They announced they would run a store at Clay Banks and manage the pier. Just as they had at Foscoro, Swaty & Fellows opened their pier to others at “reasonable rates.” The plan was to use the *Sea Star* to supply merchandise to the store, and then have her load wood at Clay Banks or Foscoro on her way back south (*Ahnapee Record* 1881t).

A brief summary of the situation at Foscoro was carried in the September 22, 1881, issue of the *Door County Advocate*:

Capt. Fellows intends to put the mill in good shape, and begin sawing early in the winter. A good stock of logs, banked last winter, are to be converted into lumber and shingles. Wood is booming. One of the buyers recently paid \$3 per cord for sawed maple in the woods. The hauling of it to the pier will bring it up to about \$4.50. This indicates that there is good demand and stiff prices. The schooner *Sea Star* was caught at the pier here by the heavy blow last Thursday night. The vessel hung on all night, and barring the pulling out of a few spiles from the structure, no damage was done. Fellows & Swaty, who have purchased the pier at Clay Banks, will begin operations at the latter place about the first of November. A new store is to be built, and a general mercantile business carried on (*Door County Advocate* 1881d).

Newspaper records confirm that the *Sea Star* continued her usual rounds in 1881. She carried cedar posts from Foscoro to Chicago in April and 100 cords of bark from Ahnapee to Racine in July (*Ahnapee Record* 1881k, 1881n). Foscoro sent more wood and bark to Chicago in her hold and on her decks in August (*Ahnapee Record* 1881o). She carried bark, cordwood, and ties in October. In late November, she arrived in Ahnapee with merchandise for Swaty and Fellow’s stores (*Ahnapee Record* 1881u). Just as November ended, the schooner *Julia Smith* ran aground between Foscoro and Ahnapee. Captain Scheunemann sent the *Sea Star*’s yawl to pick up the crew and bring them ashore. The shipping season ran long that year, and the *Sea Star* was able to carry railroad ties and store goods between Foscoro, Chicago, and Milwaukee through December 1881 and into January of 1882 (*Ahnapee Record* 1881v; 1881w, 1881x; 1882a).

The remaining incidents of note at Foscoro in 1881 all involved the 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of traffic accidents. A man named Pat Wilson stole a wagon belonging to Charles Berg and took off in it. Before he had gotten far, the horses ran between a signpost and a tree and smashed the wagon between them. The fact that Berg had tied his wagon up in front of Foscoro House may go far to explaining why Wilson left with the wrong wagon and why his driving was so erratic (*Ahnapee Record* 1881p). In late November, Joseph and John Monosso hitched their wagon up in front of Foscoro House and headed in for a drink. Their horse, tired of waiting for them, got itself unhitched and “started for home at no gentle pace,” giving their buckboard a pounding on the way (*Ahnapee Record* 1881u). Just a week later, a horse and buggy owned by John McDonald backed off the rebuilt bridge over Stoney Creek onto the frozen mill pond and went through the ice. Both the horse and the boy driving the rig were saved without serious injury (*Ahnapee Record* 1881v).

Foscoro rated an entry in the Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1882. The community was described as follows:

Foscoro – A village on the shore of Lake Michigan, on the extreme northeastern corner of Kewaunee County, 6 miles above Ahnapee, being in sec. 6, T 26, R 25 E. Stony Creek, which empties at this point affords an excellent water power, having a fall of 140 feet within a mile and a half. The principal trade is the export of lumber, shingles, wood, bark, etc.

The Directory noted that the community enjoyed daily mail service and had a Western Union telegraph office. Captain Fellows was postmaster. The Directory listed four businesses: the Fellows lumber mill and pier store, the general store operated by Swaty & Son, Foscoro House, and carpenter/millwright Isaac Orell (Hogg & Wright Co. 1882:180). The grist mill that formerly ran at the complex is not mentioned and seems to have been abandoned. In fact, Fellows brought up the idea of building another one in 1882 (*Ahnapee Record* 1882f).

Instead, 1882 brought more tears. The year started with a notice that Swaty & Fellows were buying timber along Stony Creek with the intention of floating it down to the Foscoro mill in the spring (*Weekly Expositor Independent* 1882b). In March, Captain Fellows gave a four-year lease to his farm to a man from Sheboygan (*Ahnapee Record* 1882f). Fellows put a help wanted advertisement in the newspapers that spring, looking for people to peel tanning bark and make railroad ties. “Men willing to work can earn good wages”, he said. Just below the ad was a notice that lumber was for sale:

For Sale: A lot of good roof boards at \$6.00 per thousand. Good shingles at \$1.00 per thousand. Joice [*sic*], from 24 to 32 feet long, at \$15.00 per thousand. Also a good assortment of other lumber at low prices (*Ahnapee Record* 1882d).

The fact that Fellows had to advertise his lumber products in this way, rather than selling by the shipload, is another symptom of the waning boom. Advertisements ran in the newspapers asking farmers to sell grain and other farm products at Foscoro and Clay Banks. Foscoro started an anemic pivot towards an agricultural economy. Fellows, meanwhile, went to work in the mill and promptly injured his foot. He spent some time on crutches afterwards (*Ahnapee Record* 1882h).

Just after the steam barge *Daisy Day* arrived with the opening of the 1882 shipping season and dropped off freight for the stores (*Ahnapee Record* 1882f), the cat belonging to the Orell family wandered off and followed a neighbor to the Frank Paronto home nearby. Orell was Foscoro’s carpenter/millwright, but that day he was working a job up at Whitefish Bay, leaving his wife Mary behind with three-year-old Susan and little Mary Katherine (aged 1 ½). Susan missed her companion. Mary Orell headed over to see Paronto and get the cat back. She looked back over her shoulder as she left the house and saw her daughters standing in the window, waving at her. “Mamma has gone after kittie,” Susan told Mary Katherine. Unbeknownst to Mary or the children, their house was on fire. A few moments later, as Mary chatted with Paronto, someone saw the smoke. Mary and her neighbors sprinted towards the home, which was engulfed in flames. Mary punched through the glass windows with her bare hands, lacerating herself in a futile attempt to reach into the inferno and save her children. It was too late. When Orell returned, he came home to the news that his home and children were gone (*Ahnapee Record* 1882g).

The *Sea Star* spent the winter in Sturgeon Bay. She needed repairs and the shipbuilders there gave her the required attention (*Ahnapee Record* 1882b). She was back on her rounds by mid-March (*Ahnapee Record* 1882e). In late March the vessel was libeled for \$69.70 in towage fees by O. B. Green and others in Chicago. The U. S. Marshal seized her until the matter could be resolved. It was, and fairly quickly, and she was carrying railroad ties by the end of the month (*Ahnapee Record* 1882f). On a foggy day in May, the *Sea Star* went onto the beach near Sheboygan in a light wind. Her crew threw 1,000 posts overboard to lighten her enough for the tug *Kitty Smoke* to pull her back out into the lake. The newspapers reported that the vessel suffered only “slight damage” (*Ahnapee Record* 1882d) but when she picked up 80 cords of wood at Clay Banks a few days later she was taking on water (*Ahnapee Record* 1882k). Even so, she continued to make her rounds from Clay Banks for the remainder of the year (*Ahnapee Record* 1882m, 1882o, 1882p).

In late April 1882, another bout of alcohol-fueled trouble hit the newspapers. One John Vaber, in the process of moving to Sturgeon Bay, stopped at the Eagle Hotel in Clay Banks and had a few drinks to make his journey south to pick up another load of household items a bit more pleasant. He struck up a conversation with Ahnapee resident Samuel Newman. Newman liked Vaber’s horses. The two made a deal. Vaber sold his horse team to Newman for \$25 and the horses Newman arrived with. Vaber pocketed the money and the men left the saloon and switched horses. Vaber then set out happily in the direction of Foscoro. He arrived in Foscoro battered, bruised, and bleeding. When Foscoroites asked what happened, he told them he had fallen from his wagon. He went on to Ahnapee. When asked there, he told a thrilling tale of highway robbery. He fought bravely, he said, knocking two of the four men to the ground and setting them all to flight, though they got away with ten of the \$25 dollars he had set out with. He explained the competing stories as caution on his part, since he didn’t know whether the townsfolk of Foscoro might not be in on the robbery scheme (*Ahnapee Record* 1882i).

John Vaber implied that the people of Foscoro were not trustworthy. Two weeks later two of Captain Fellows’ sons proved him wrong. Fred Fellows, now 21 years of age, was on the pier on a mid-June day when he saw eight-year-old Mike Jenson topple into the water. He dove in after the boy and pulled him to the surface. Eighteen-year-old Lewis Fellows launched a small boat and hauled both out of Lake Michigan. The boy didn’t know how to swim, and the brothers saved a life that day (*Ahnapee Record* 1882n).

In the opening weeks of December 1882, residents of the region who scoffed at Vaber’s tale of highway robbery reconsidered matters. News spread that one of the more prominent farmers living in the vicinity of Clay Banks had been set upon by highwaymen just south of Foscoro. Gilbert G. Berge, carrying “quite a sum of money”, was overtaken by two other horse teams on his way north from Ahnapee. The men on the wagons blocked his way and brought him to a halt. Sensing danger, Berge whipped his horses and made them bolt. The robbers followed, but Berge’s horses were faster (*Door County Advocate* 1882b).

1883 opened with talk of a grand farewell dance to be held at Foscoro House. Hugh Acker was done with the saloon business and traded Foscoro House for the farm of blacksmith C. B. Post near Clay Banks (*Ahnapee Record* 1883a). Post had no wish to run a saloon either. He announced to the disappointed citizens of Foscoro that he intended to repurpose the property and use it for a wagon



and blacksmith shop (*Door County Advocate* 1883a). With this social calamity, a year full of other disasters began.

January 1883 brought the destruction of 100 feet of the pier in another ice shove. Twenty cords of wood were caught in the splintered mess. Fellows and the Swatys decided to overhaul the entire pier in the spring (*Door County Advocate* 1883b). Before they could get the chance, another ice field cut 600 more feet off the pier and tumbled 40 cords of beech wood and ten cords of slab wood into the water. Fellows started rebuilding as soon as he could, and repairs were underway by the end of April. The expectation was that the repairs would be complete before the shipping season began (*Ahnapee Record* 1883b; *Weekly Expositor Independent* 1883b). A few weeks later came word that the material knocked off the pier was washing up near Ahnapee and might yet be salvaged (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883g).

The 1883 shipping season began in March, though it got off to a rocky start. The steambarge *Hilton* tried to land at Foscoro, but the waves were too high, and she steamed onwards. She tried again a week later and picked up a cargo of hay and grain (*Ahnapee Record* 1883e; *Weekly Expositor Independent* 1883a). The *Sea Star*, meanwhile, got a new coat of paint. Once gussied up, she picked up a cargo of shingles and posts for Chicago and set about her usual rounds (*Ahnapee Record* 1883c).

May brought family reunions and fun to the Fellows brothers. George Fellows moved back to Foscoro to temporarily resume management of the mill. He shipped his family's household items north and sent for his family afterwards (*Door County Advocate* 1883c). Brother Fred Fellows, meantime, tried his hand at fishing. When the sucker run commenced in May he set out a seine net and pulled in 1,500 fish in a single haul (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1883g).

The *Sea Star*, on the other hand, had a bad May. She tied up to the pier at Clay Banks to load in the latter half of the month, but was caught there when a storm rolled in. She pounded bottom and her deckhands threw yet another deck load into the lake. That raised her high enough and once the recovered cargo was reloaded, she turned south with a "useless" rudder (*Ahnapee Record* 1883f; *Inter Ocean* 1883). After making Chicago and successfully unloading, she caught a tow out of the harbor. An unnamed schooner ran into her on the way out, taking out her jibboom. The owners of the unnamed schooner forked over \$55 to pay for the damages (*Ahnapee Record* 1883g; *Door County Advocate* 1883d).

Vessels further north in Foscoro had similar problems. The propellor *Favorite*, towing a string of barges, ran into poor weather approaching Foscoro and went onto the nearby reef. With no deck load to toss off, her hands brought one of the barges closer and moved some of the propellor's fuel over to it. She buoyed back up off the reef with an unknown amount of damage (*Door County Advocate* 1883e).

On a June night in 1883, the highwaymen struck again. C. I. Hitt, the owner of the Eagle Hotel and saloon in Clay Banks started out towards home from Ahnapee. He had two men with him, but the seat of his wagon was broken so his traveling companions climbed into the wagon box and sat there. To any observers on a dark night, it looked like he was traveling alone. Hitt's wagon clattered through Foscoro and across the bridge over Stoney Creek. As Hitt drove past the Foscoro

school, the flash and crack of a gunshot came from the bushes along the roadside. Whoever shot at Hitt missed. The horses bolted, and Hitt used his wits and strength to bring them back under control even as they sped on northward to safety. This third attempt at ambush confirmed that highwaymen were afoot around Foscoro and roused the indignation and watchfulness of area residents and the press.

It is about time that highway business was being investigated. The piece of road referred to is well adapted for the uses of the foot pad, and if there are any there engaged in the dark work they should be ferried out and put where they will not molest innocent travelers (*Ahnapee Record* 1883i).

Highwaymen were not the community's only problem to tackle. It was clear by 1883 that the lumber boom was ending, and there was talk about what came next. Hay held promise, as did the pasturing of sheep. Fellows put in a hay scale "so that farmers can bring along their hay and find out how many pounds they have got" (*Weekly Expositor Independent* 1883c). That summer, Christopher Brannsdorf built a large 50 x 125-foot barn near the pier for pressing and storing hay. The pressing machine was dropped off on the pier at Ahnapee rather than Foscoro or Clay Banks, suggesting that both piers were still being rebuilt (*Ahnapee Record* 1883j).

Hay was only a source of side income, however. The bulk of Foscoro's business was still lumber. George Fellows set to work in the mill. In late July 1883, the course of the day took him over to the saws. While the blade whined and spun, the machinery failed, setting off a rapid-fire chain reaction. The pulley that tightened the belt for the top saw pulled loose and fell onto the main belt pulley. The larger pulley, running at high speed, shattered and sprayed shrapnel throughout the mill. It all happened in a split second. One large pulley fragment, measuring nearly a square foot in size, hit George Fellows hard just above his right hip. He fell. The injury was serious and a doctor was sent for immediately (*Ahnapee Record* 1883k). Thankfully, he made a full recovery.

Three weeks later, sixty feet of the Foscoro pier fell over, taking 40–50 cords of tanning bark along for the ride. Workers fished the bark back out of the lake and restacked it elsewhere. "The pier will be rebuilt immediately," said the press (*Weekly Expositor Independent* 1883d). Whether weather or the effects of previous ice shoves contributed to the collapse, or whether the cost-saving method of letting the pier pilings settle on their own without benefit of a pile driver finally caught up to the Fellows family was not recorded.

That fall, Foscoro's façade of financial solvency cracked. A lawsuit was filed against Captain and Mary Fellows, Harrison and Jane Fellows, Isaac Orell, E. K. and E. H. Rand, W. M. Hoyt, C. Watrous, R. J. Burnett, and A. M. Fuller (*Weekly Expositor Independent* 1883e). The plaintiffs were Arthur and Lizzie French, Ada Briggs, and Nellie Brooks, all members of a prominent Kenosha family. Just what interest they had in the Fellows' financial dealings is unclear, but Arthur French is known to have worked as an insurance agent in later years (United States Census 1900). Fellow defendants E. K. Rand and E. H. Rand were associated with the Wagner Rand Hardware Company of Manitowoc (*Door County Advocate* 1883f). Hoyt, Watrous, and Fuller represented the mercantile firm of W. M. Hoyt & Co. of Chicago, and Burnett likely did as well (*Crystal Lake Herald* 1881; *Waukegan Weekly Gazette* 1880).

The remainder of 1883's news from Foscoro revolved around the doings of the Fellows family and the *Sea Star*. Captain Fellows went south to Milwaukee and Chicago to buy goods for the stores. George, having recovered from his injury, went 'hunting' in northern Michigan with friends (*Ahnapee Record* 1883p). The *Sea Star* salvaged sodden rye from the wreck of the propellor *Potomac* in August (*Ahnapee Record* 1883l), nearly beached after getting caught by a storm while tied up at Foscoro in October (*Ahnapee Record* 1883m), lost an anchor off of Plum Island in November (*Ahnapee Record* 1883n), and finished the year delivering Christmas trees from Ahnapee to Milwaukee and Chicago (*Ahnapee Record* 1883o).

When the *Sea Star*'s holiday deliveries were done, Captain Scheunemann steered the *Sea Star* northward to her winter quarters. The ship survived another troublesome year, just as Foscoro and the Fellows family had. By New Year's Day, 1884, it must have been clear to the residents of Foscoro that life could not continue as it had during the lumber boom, but there was still so much to do. Captain Fellows and the growing sons still living under his roof bore the burden of keeping the family's mill going with less timber to harvest and mill, while also dealing with his business interests in Ahnapee and the Swaty & Fellow's business at Clay Banks. Some wood was being cut in their timberlands even then, banked up in Stoney Creek to await the spring thaw. Capt. Fellows expected that it would last them at least through the coming milling season (*Ahnapee Record* 1884a).

When the milling season returned along with warmer weather and sunnier skies, the ice withdrew from Stoney Creek's mill pond, the mill's Leffel wheel spun, logs were drawn into the mill, and the vessels of the lake fleet ventured back out onto Lake Michigan. The *Sea Star* sailed out to begin 1884's rounds. In April, she arrived in Ahnapee's harbor, ran into a pier, and knocked a hole in her bow. Undeterred, her captain sailed her north to pick up cordwood at Foscoro for delivery in Racine (*Ahnapee Record* 1884b).

Capt. Fellows, meantime, did the calculus and decided that the financial see-saw between lumber and shingle prices was moving in shingles' favor. The millhands set to work making them (*Door County Advocate* 1884a). Then the Leffel wheel broke and the mill shut back down again. For a third time, Foscoro had an opportunity to switch to steam. For a third time, Fellows chose water power. Fellows ordered new parts from a foundry in Sturgeon Bay (*Weekly Expositor Independent* 1884). The wheel was repaired and the mill started back up. The mill shut back down. Repairs had taken too long. The spring freshets were over and the heat of summer dropped the level of water in Stoney Creek so far that the mill was only able to run a few days each week (*Door County Advocate* 1884b).

Foscoro wasn't able to produce enough to keep the *Sea Star* occupied. The vessel went north to pick up lumber from Bailey's Harbor in September (*Ahnapee Record* 1884c), then returned to Foscoro to load any lumber and shingles that were ready. Shortly afterwards, the newspapers announced that the *Sea Star* was heading to her winter quarters in Ahnapee early due to "scarcity of freight" (*Ahnapee Record* 1884d). The *Sea Star* tied up in Ahnapee harbor. The schooner *Cora* ran into her. The damage was slight, but the *Sea Star* went to Manitowoc for repairs anyway before returning to Ahnapee (*Ahnapee Record* 1884e, 1884f). By then, the mill was running again and shingles were piling up. The *Sea Star* sailed back out onto the lake to resume carrying Swaty &

Fellows' freight. As in 1883, her last loads of the season were Christmas trees (*Ahnapee Record* 1884g).

Foscoro shipped only forty-two cargoes in 1884. It was less than half the number shipped ten years before. The feeling hovering over the community was that 1885 would bring even fewer ships to call. Swaty & Fellows made the decision to buy only a minimal amount of wood that winter. The newspapers noted that the *Sea Star* had been kept busy enough after all, but that "freights have been so low that the net profits are very meager indeed" (*Door County Advocate* 1884c).

Partway through the 1884–1885 hauling season, Capt. Fellows put an ad in the Ahnapee newspaper advertising a sale on lumber and shingles.

For the next sixty days I will sell good Lumber and Timber at six dollars per thousand; good Roof Boards, four dollars per thousand; good Shingles, fifty cents per thousand. C. L. Fellows (*Ahnapee Record* 1885a).

He had goods left to sell, but the lake ice had settled in and he had no way to ship his wares. He could have waited until spring and loaded the goods onto the *Sea Star* or another vessel but did not. Was Fellows in need of immediate cash? Did he reflect on the fact that declining yield from his mill meant that vessels were leaving half-filled? Fellows made another cursory search for supplemental sources of income. Kewaunee County was embracing dairy, so Fellows toyed with following suit. He put out more notices that he had pressed hay to sell and wanted to buy cows (*Door County Advocate* 1885a). No cheese factory or creamery was ever built.

In mid-April 1885, a fierce storm broke a sheet of lake ice loose and sent it grinding north up the coast. The ice field collided with the piers at Foscoro and Clay Banks, "taking away one half of each one" (*Ahnapee Record* 1885b). Piles snapped in half. Sections of the piers turned into wooden islands cut off from shore. Around 500 ties and 500 posts were staged on the pier at Foscoro, awaiting transport. They fell into the ice and were gone. Damage to Foscoro pier totaled around \$500 (\$15,600 in modern currency). Estimates suggested it would take at least two months to rebuild. Swaty & Fellows already had plans in the works to refit the Clay Banks pier and quickly put them into high gear. The Foscoro pier wasn't due for a refit, and Capt. Fellows decided that half a pier was better than none. As he said, the half-pier was enough "to allow of shipping what forest produce the firm have at that point" (*Ahnapee Record* 1885b; *Door County Advocate* 1885b).

The *Sea Star*, on the other hand, did get maintenance. Over the winter Capt. Fellows saw to it that she was overhauled and given another nice coat of paint. The Ahnapee newspapers approved of the new look, stating that she looked better than before (*Ahnapee Record* 1885c) Her captain waited until it was safe to venture out, then set off to join the 1885 shipping season. In early July 1885, the *Sea Star*'s captain carefully steered her alongside the mangled remains of the Foscoro pier to pick up railroad ties. As before, they weren't enough to fill her hold, so her captain turned her southward again to Ahnapee and picked up more cargo there before departing for the cities (*Ahnapee Record* 1885d).

In the summer of 1885, the long court battle with the French siblings was decided in the plaintiff's favor. Some of Fellows' timberlands northwest and west of Foscoro were seized and put up for auction in October to pay off the judgement (*Weekly Expositor Independent* 1885).

Not long afterwards Fellow's pocketbooks took another hit. The *Sea Star* got into a traffic accident. The Chicago River, which served as the highway to the city's immense lumberyards, was, as one might expect, a crowded place during the shipping season. The *Sea Star* was tied up there quietly when the propellor *Peerless*—attempting to negotiate the traffic and currents without a tug—rear ended her. The *Sea Star* shot forward, snapping her lines and slamming into the next schooner over. When the crashing, creaking, splintering tangle of ships came to a halt, the *Sea Star* drifted with her foremast broken and dragging in the river, her jibboom, headgear, and bowsprit gone, and great cracks in her bow. Estimates of the damage to the *Sea Star* alone topped \$1,000 (over \$31,000 in modern currency). Ideally, the ship would have been rebuilt before going back into service. Instead, in keeping with past decision making, Fellows decided that half a ship was better than none. He engaged the steambarge *C. G. Burroughs* to tow the vessel's hull around loaded with the season's final freight for Swaty & Fellows (*Ahnapee Record* 1885e, 1885g; *Door County Advocate* 1885c, 1885d).

Foscoro found itself in a catch-22. It needed money to ship wood and needed wood to make money. Captain Fellows was getting older. In 1885, he shared his home with five men and four women—most likely his wife, sons Fred, Lewis, William, and Frank, and daughter Edith, along with two mystery women who may have been domestic servants, relatives, or long-term guests (Wisconsin State Census 1885). George and his family lived elsewhere again. Capt. Fellows was not any more anxious to handle affairs at the mill than he was before. The next advertisement in the newspapers bore Fred's name, rather than his: "Men Wanted to make 500 cords of wood; 20,000 ties, and 50,000 posts. Enquire [*sic*] of F. W. Fellows, Foscoro" (*Ahnapee Record* 1885f).

Fred's tenure at the mill didn't go any better than George's had. The spring of 1886 brought another storm and another scythe of wind-driven ice. The piers at Foscoro, Clay Banks, and Horn's Pier fell before it. Another \$700 in expenses was entered into Swaty & Fellows' books, including \$400 in damage at Foscoro (\$12,000 in modern currency) (*Ahnapee Record* 1886a). The Foscoro pier was reported to be "completely demolished." The ice had snapped the piles and jumbled them together in a heap (*Door County Advocate* 1886a). Foscoro went quiet. The action shifted to Clay Banks, where Franz Swaty bought out the Swaty & Fellows store (Boyd et al. 2020). Otherwise, little of note regarding Fellow's commerce made the newspapers that year, ...with one terrible exception.

The *Sea Star* got her rebuild over the winter of 1885–1886, or at least received repairs good enough to let her start sailing on her own again. She loaded railroad ties for one Sam Perry in Ahnapee in May of 1886, a sign that Fellows allowed her to be contracted out while the Swaty & Fellows piers in Foscoro and Clay Banks were repaired (*Ahnapee Record* 1886b). The pier at Clay Banks, where damage was least and the potential for profit greatest, was rebuilt first. Captain Silbilsky, having taken over from Captain Schuenemann, sailed there on November 4, 1886, to pick up wood. Captain Fellows and son Lewis were there when the first cargo was hefted onto the *Sea Star's* decks.



The wind shifted to the north, then picked up force. A true November gale came howling down the lake, piling the waves before it. The waters of Sturgeon Bay receded and dropped by two feet as the storm surge rushed out into the main body of Lake Michigan. The lake fleet's captains fled before it and sought safety in the coastal harbors. The *Sea Star*, exposed and helpless at Clay Banks, rose and fell with the mounting waves, rigging singing in the gale, then struck the Swaty & Fellows pier. Each swell sent the ship into the pier again. Hollow booms mingled with the sound of cracking wood. A forty-foot section of the pier gave way under the assault and one of the pilings speared deep into the *Sea Star*'s stern.

On the pier and on the ship, a desperate battle unfolded as pier workers and crew struggled to disentangle the impaled and heaving *Sea Star* from the shattered pier. Somehow, in the midst of the wind and drenching spray and confusion, they did it. The *Sea Star* floated free. Lewis Fellows and the *Sea Star*'s crew were on the pier, or at least managed to escape the ship as she broke free. Captain Silbilsky and Captain Fellows remained on board the stricken and sinking *Sea Star*. They were trapped. A runner dashed up to the telegraph office and sent a call for help to Sturgeon Bay.

The lifesaving crew arrived at midnight and used a Lyle gun (a type of small cannon) to fire a lifeline across the *Sea Star*. Captain Sibilsky evacuated first, sliding in a chair sling to the lifeboat while his ship pounded heavily on the lake bottom. Captain Fellows, still on board a schooner that was coming apart, refused to go. He did not trust the line to keep him above the waves. The lifesaving crew carefully positioned their surfboat alongside the *Sea Star*, and Fellows dropped into it, the last man off the sinking ship. The windstorm continued through the night. In the morning, the *Sea Star* was a wreck. Salvors stripped her of her rigging and canvas. The workers at Clay Banks regathered her cargo of wood when it washed ashore (*Ahnapee Record* 1886c; Boyd et al. 2020; 101–102; *Door County Advocate* 1886b).

The *Sea Star* was gone. The Clay Banks pier was in terrible shape. Thousands of dollars of damages and expenses weighed against any profits made at Foscoro's pier store and through the diminishing sales of timber products. Another lawsuit against Swaty & Fellows for \$202.66 was underway in the superior courts in Illinois, brought by one Charles W. Merriam and other plaintiffs (*Inter Ocean* 1886). But wood still came in, and Fred Fellows had plans. In February of 1887, a reporter for the *Ahnapee Record* was "surprised" to see green railroad ties and fence posts in Foscoro's yards. Fred told the reporter there was more timber yet to be cut (*Ahnapee Record* 1887a). Work was underway on the Foscoro pier...again. By the end of March 1887, Foscoro's pier was rebuilt nearly to its original configuration, and Fred announced that he intended to make it 500 feet longer. He wanted "as good a pier as there is on the west shore of Lake Michigan" (*Ahnapee Record* 1887b). It was an ambitious and expensive project.

Not long afterwards, the ubiquitous advertisements for Swaty & Fellows vanished from the Door County newspapers. Captain Harrison Fellows died in Racine (*Racine Journal* 1887). The John Pritzlaff Hardware Company of Milwaukee sued Swaty & Fellows, sending the Swaty & Fellows firm into receivership (*Door County Independent* 1887a). Captain Fellows and Fred Fellows traveled to Sturgeon Bay to testify before the court (*Door County Advocate* 1887a). Racine-based insurance agent John Knight and Erastus C. Peck, the former Racine County clerk, filed their own lawsuit not long afterwards and listed the Pritzlaff Hardware Co., the French siblings, Captain and Mary Fellows, George Grimmer, and Anton Hamacek as defendants (*Door County Independent*

1887c; *Racine Journal* 1889b; *Racine Republican* 1891). Swaty & Fellows dissolved during the onslaught of litigation.

The various lawsuits shed light on the financial entanglements Foscoro had gotten into. Grimmer was a former Republican state senator, once was half-owner of the Kewaunee sawmill, and held numerous mortgages. Swaty & Fellows asked for his help securing a pile driver and fighting off competition from another pier complex near their Clay Banks operation, and Fellows asked for an appointment as a fish warden to bring in more income (the request seems to have been denied) (HistoryLady1 2014a). Anton Hamacek formed half of the A. Hamacek & Co. foundry and machine shop in Ahnapee (HistoryLady1 2020). The French siblings, Knight, and Peck were all residents of Racine, where Captain Fellows still had family connections.

### ***The Foscoro Shipyards***

The last years of Foscoro went no better. They are marked by the Fellows family's sporadic attempts to diversify—some relatively successful and some not—and a stubborn refusal to put lumber milling behind them. George and Edith Fellows lived elsewhere. The rest of the Fellows children stayed with their parents in the big house on Stoney Creek. Captain Fellows and wife Mary were in their early 50s. The Fellows family and Foscoro were on their own. While Capt. Fellows was certainly still involved in the family business, and eldest son George came to visit often enough, it was the younger brothers who took over. Fred Fellows, who oversaw the mill and handled the major matters over the previous year, remained the public face of Foscoro's commercial dealings. The family came together under the umbrella of a new firm named Fellows Bros.

Several paths lay open to Foscoro. The first and most obvious was the familiar lumber trade. A new and longer pier extended out from the lakeshore. The mill was in working order, at least during some portions of the year. The family still owned timberlands. Wood was still coming in and a few ships were still loading cargoes for the southern cities. The Fellows family knew the ins and outs of the trade. On the other hand, the trade was fading away along with Kewaunee County's forests. The entire county knew that the region's future lay elsewhere, and the Fellows must have known it too.

There was the Foscoro store, but the store barely figures in historic accounts, and it is easy to get the impression that the store never featured prominently in the family's calculations. There were no advertisements such as Swaty & Fellows had run boasting of low prices and varied stock. On the other hand, advertisements cost money and that seems to have been in increasingly short supply in Foscoro. They had the Stoney Creek farm, but it was no show farm. Foscoro did what it could with the hay trade but could a community sustain itself on hay? There is no hint that they had an interest in cheese, and Fellows' initial interest in buying dairy cattle seems to have fizzled out.

Fellows Bros. stayed with what they knew—lumber—but worked on a backup plan by devoting more attention to their farm. Specifically, they worked to build up a good flock of sheep. The brothers continued to run the aging mill and stage wood products on the pier for shipping. In August 1887, the schooner *J. H. Stevens* was caught in rough conditions loading at the pier. The

ship pounded the shore “considerable” and sprung a leak. She turned south with her cargo then got caught off Two Rivers when a squall blew through. The captain watched the vessel’s foresail tear away, then turned the schooner around and made for Kewaunee and a tug (*Ahnapee Record* 1887e). The incident was yet another reminder of the unpredictability of lake travel.

The autumn of 1887 and the winter of 1887–1888 were devoted to getting the complex back in good shape. The rebuilt pier was better than before. The family needed a ship to replace the *Sea Star* so bought a ‘fixer-upper’ in the form of the tug *Tillinghast* for \$23 in August. The tug was, at that point, underwater in the most literal of senses, but it was pumped out by hand and towed to Foscoro. The plan was to lengthen the vessel and put it into service as a steambarge (*Ahnapee Record* 1887d; *Door County Advocate* 1887b). Once at Foscoro, the hull was evaluated. If it failed inspection, the Fellows family planned to burn it to salvage its iron (*Door County Independent* 1887b). Instead, the Fellows family liked what they saw. They thought their new ship—name yet to be determined—would be ready for service before the 1887 shipping season closed (*Ahnapee Record* 1887f, 1887g). The season ended with the vessel “considerably enlarged,” and with new frames, a new ceiling, and a new keelson, but not yet ready for the lake (*Door County Advocate* 1887c).

The mill shut down with the advent of cold weather. It was given needed repairs. Stoney Creek was not reliable. Fellows Bros. tackled that problem by getting the mill ready for a conversion to steam power. Their plan called for milling hardwood lumber and making shingles (*Door County Advocate* 1888a; *Door County Independent* 1888b). The new machinery would need fuel, so Fred Fellows hired men to chop cordwood:

Men Wanted. Men wanted to make 2,000 cords of wood this winter. House rent and fire wood free until the first of May. Enquire [*sic*] of F. W. Fellows, Foscoro (*Ahnapee Record* 1888a).

In all the bustle, the store was overlooked. The family underestimated demand and the store’s shelves started running bare mid-way through the winter. Fellows Bros. arranged to have new stock sent north along with the new machinery for their mill, but the lake ice had already set in, and lake travel was impossible. The Fellows family improvised. They had their orders shipped north to Menominee, Michigan by railroad, then hauled their goods twenty miles across the frozen surface of Green Bay to Sturgeon Bay and thence overland to Foscoro (*Door County Independent* 1888a, 1888b).

Whether the year brought good business or bad is unclear, though it seems to have kept everyone too busy to work on the former tug *Tillinghast*. The newspapers are quiet about Foscoro in 1888. Three events of note, apart from the usual social visits and parties, took place that year. Another lawsuit—this one by Otto B. Bjorhquist, a resident of Door County, vs. Captain and Mrs. Fellows, Wlastimil Swaty, Francis Swaty, Fred Fellows, William Brown, Lizzie G. French, Ida Briggs, Nellie Brook, and George Grimmer, was served in April 1888 (*Door County Advocate* 1888b). Once again, past plaintiffs were put in the defendant’s seat.

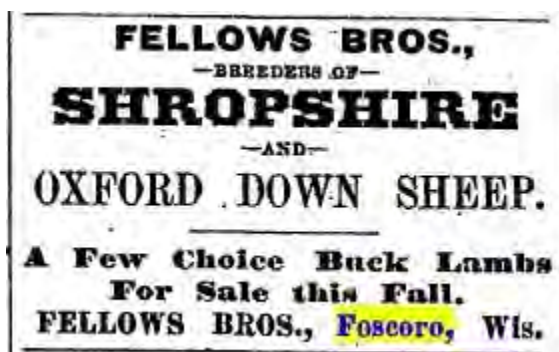


Figure 129: Notice advertising sheep for sale from Fellows Bros. herd (*Ahnapee Record* 1888b).

The second event was far more welcome. That September, Fred Fellows married Julia B. Norton of Fish Creek, Wisconsin. The wedding was held in Fish Creek and was a celebration to remember. “Never in the history of Door County has such a feast been spread,” enthused the reporter who provided an account of the wedding to the Door County press. A long list of wedding presents followed, including a lemonade set from Captain Fellows and Mary, a picture from brother George, a pair of vases from sister Edith, and a glass water set and tray, along with a cruet set, cake dishes and berry bowls, silverware, a head rest for a rocking chair, lace, and linens (*Door County Independent* 1888d).

Finally, George Fellows bought the scow *Dreadnaught*, another fixer-upper with collision damage and a missing mainmast. He had her towed to Foscoro from Sturgeon Bay (*Door County Independent* 1888e). Now Fellows Bros. had two ships to work on instead of one. The *Dreadnaught*’s damage was relatively easy to fix compared to the work needed on the former *Tillinghast*, and she entered service almost immediately in tow of the tug *Edith*. Her first load was cordwood picked up at Foscoro (*Ahnapee Record* 1888c). Just a couple of weeks later, another ship—the small schooner *Clara*—headed to Foscoro as well and picked up lumber and cedar shingles to deliver to George Fellows in Racine (*Door County Advocate* 1888c).

1888’s shipping and milling seasons ended and the carpenters of Foscoro descended on the hull of the former tug *Tillinghast* and got back to work. Once again, the newspapers promised that the vessel would be back in service soon. All that was needed were a boiler and engine. Fellows Bros. wanted good and heavy machinery and felt that if properly outfitted the vessel could be “made to get up and dust.” John Jenson, one of the carpenters working on her, missed a step and fell into the hold, and was carried home with injured ribs. The carpenters and shipwrights gave the *Dreadnaught* a going-over as well, supplying the scow with a new mainmast, deck, planking and taking care of “other necessary repairs” (*Door County Independent* 1889a). The latter projects, in the end, doubled the vessel’s cargo capacity (*Door County Advocate* 1889b).

Foscoro underwent a mini renaissance. The winter’s sleighing was excellent and logs were stockpiled at the mill in good numbers (*Door County Advocate* 1889a). Another huge party, with 70 guests from surrounding communities, was held at the Fellows house (*Ahnapee Record* 1889a). The Fellows brothers even started their own newspaper, the *Foscoro Vindicator*. The *Ahnapee Record* called it a “neatly gotten up little folio...devoted to the interests of the public generally and to the business interests of the publishers, particularly” (*Ahnapee Record* 1889b).

In the spring of 1889, the Fellows family and their co-defendants lost the court battle against Knight and Peck, and a notice of foreclosure was served. Eighty acres of forestland in Door County was seized to pay off the judgement (*Door County Independent* 1889b). Not long afterwards, the mill started up and the rattle of pulleys and the distinctive double-whine of shingles

being shaved off cedar logs filled the air. Fellows Bros. expected to make and ship over a million shingles for the Racine market. At a capacity of 25,000 shingles per day, however, producing that amount would take only a couple of months (*Ahnapee Record* 1889c). The mill's new machinery, if up to date, helped automate the process somewhat by moving the wood carriage back and forth—saving the fingers of the mill operators from contact with the saw blade and keeping them firmly attached to their owners.

The former *Tillinghast* and the *Dreadnaught* were still being rebuilt, so other ships came to pick the shingles up. The scow *Venture* arrived in April (*Ahnapee Record* 1889d). The schooner *Grace Williams* came to call and load as well. They were the only two vessels to load that month. There were already signs of trouble ahead. Water in the creek dropped below the mill's ability to use it again. Though the newspapers reported that the mill was switching to steam power, and that Fellows had ordered and picked up the required machinery, the conversion was never completed. Based on the brief note about the issue in the *Door County Advocate*, it seems that the dam gates were kept closed most of each day to bring the water level up to the point where it could sustain the mill. After the gates were opened and water rushed out to spin the Leffel wheel, the pond dropped below sufficient levels after a paltry four hours (*Door County Advocate* 1889b).

On the other hand, Fellows' sheep flock thrived. Fifty-six lambs survived the spring, joining the ninety sheep that graced the pastures of the Stoney Creek farm. The brothers sheared 600 pounds of wool and expected to sell it for almost \$150 (almost \$5,000 in modern currency). "And yet some people say there is no money in sheep," said the *Door County Advocate* (1889b).

The *Dreadnaught* launched that August and promptly loaded with shingles, cordwood, and cedar posts. Captain Charles E. Bacon took the helm and steered her for Racine (*Ahnapee Record* 1889e). The price received for the shingles, at least, was likely less than what the Fellows family hoped for. In September, the harvest called everyone away from the mill and it shut down for several weeks. Given the low prices, the family didn't think it worth it to stockpile more shingles in any case (*Door County Advocate* 1889c). They still had cedar posts ready to ship so the steamer *Wm Finch* took a load down to Milwaukee late in the year (*Ahnapee Record* 1889f).

Fred Fellows, who tried to revitalize Foscoro against the headwinds of change, left. He took a job with the railroad in Ashland County, far away in the northern woods of Wisconsin. The telegraph office shut down, too (*Door County Advocate* 1889d; United States Census 1890). Fellows Bros., short another brother, started the 1890 milling season with a full mill pond. The spring thaw brought a temporary reprieve from the effects of deforestation and the drought that had affected the region over the prior few years (*Door County Advocate* 1890a). The saws whined again and men hauled both lumber and shingles to the pier (*Door County Advocate* 1890b).

The Fellows' back-up plan went well too. Their sheep flock grew steadily as the final decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century approached (Figure 129) and was considered to be a very fine flock indeed. Fellows Bros. invested in new stock imported up from Racine, to improve their bloodlines. The flock was 160 sheep strong at summer's end in 1890 (*Door County Advocate* 1889b, 1890e).

In October of 1890, illness struck the Fellows home in the form of typhoid fever. Son Lewis, who had married, came down with it and nearly died (*Door County Advocate* 1890d). Lewis' infant



daughter Edith fell ill as well. She was not so lucky (*Door County Advocate* 1890f). The Fellows went into mourning over the loss of the little one.

The newspapers are generally quiet about the community from 1890 on, except to note social calls, some news from the school, and each new disaster. Another lawsuit was filed by Knight and Peck against the same set of defendants, but this time adding Fred Fellows and his wife Julia. Once again, the same 80 acre parcel was put up for auction (*Door County Independent* 1890). Foscoro makes an appearance in the Polk's Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1891–1892, with a decent population of about 250 people. Most were workers and would not stay. The business listings for Foscoro consist of the Fellows Bros. store and sawmill, Captain Fellows' farm, and C. B. Post's hotel/blacksmith shop (Polk & Co. 1891:325).

Drought returned. Water levels in Stoney Creek dropped again in 1891 and the mill shut down by the end of May (*Door County Advocate* 1891c). Fellows Bros. had milled what little stock they had by then in any case (*Door County Advocate* 1891b). George Fellows sold the *Dreadnaught*. There is mention of one cargo taken from Foscoro in May of 1892, carried by the steamer *Wm Finch*, but Foscoro's output wasn't enough to fill the ship's hold. The *Wm Finch* went on to Ahnapee to complete her cargo and headed south with the intention to bring back meal and feed for Foscoro (*Ahnapee Record* 1892a). Workmen tinkered with the former *Tillinghast* "at odd times and occasions" (*Door County Advocate* 1891a).

Captain Fellows, meanwhile, was busy elsewhere. He had assumed the position of Chairman for the Town of Clay Banks in Door County (a larger area distinct from the Clay Banks settlement but including it). His new role made him responsible for much of the infrastructure in the Town, including roads and bridges. 1892 brought destructive flooding with the spring melt, so Capt. Fellows headed out in May to investigate damage to a bridge on the main road between Foscoro and Clay Banks. As he approached, he saw movement. Neighbor Gus. Awe was at work there, seemingly repairing the bridge. Fellows must have been pleased to see a local resident take the initiative and save him additional work. Then he looked closer.

Awe was rebuilding the bridge with rotten logs, putting them up in place of stringers. Fellows confusedly asked Awe what he was doing, and pointed out that the logs wouldn't hold the bridge up. Awe turned with a hoe in his hand instead of an axe or hammer. Awe raised the hoe, flew into a rage, and attacked Fellows. The 58-year-old Fellows raised his arms to his head in defense and withstood several hard blows before jumping into the ravine, sliding down its bank, and making a break for it. When he returned to the Town Hall, he told fellow board members what happened. They decided to confront Awe. Upon hearing from others that Awe had a gun and was acting irrationally, however, the impromptu intervention was called off and the board members decided to let local law enforcement handle things instead. After "quite a chase through the woods," Awe was arrested. He was found "violently insane" and sent to jail for safekeeping (*Door County Advocate* 1892).

Two months later in late June 1892, another storm rolled through and caused more flooding. This time, the mill race at Foscoro took the hit, shutting the mill down prematurely yet again and levying further costs on Foscoro's books (*Ahnapee Record* 1892b). 1892's milling and shipping season, such as it was, came and went without rating mention by the press. The harvest came in,

and winter quiet descended on Foscoro, broken only by the periodic arrival of scant loads of timber for the mill. Spring of 1893 followed, with warmer weather and the flush of green growth in the hayfields. The spring was droughty again, and fires flared up in the remaining timberlands. Blacksmith C. B. Post suffered the heaviest losses when the fire burned through some of his property and destroyed a stockpile of ties and posts he intended to sell (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1933a).

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1893, Lewis Fellows, now 29 and the eldest Fellows son still living at Foscoro, and 21-year-old brother Frank took a hay wagon down the road to neighbor Joseph Harmon's farm to pick up a load of hay. When the chore of loading the hay was finished, the brothers struggled to bend the binding pole down over the load. Frank climbed up on the wagon and lay down on the pole, using his weight to push it down from above while Lewis swung on the free end, hoping to pull it down far enough to fasten to the wagon. The pole snapped. Lewis dropped to the ground and Frank catapulted through the air and off the wagon.

Lewis picked himself up and walked around the wagon to check on Frank. After a moment's conversation with his brother, lying limp next to the wagon, Lewis called for help. Joseph Harmon rushed over and the two carried Frank into Harmon's house. Captain Fellows was summoned at once. When he arrived, he found Frank awake and talking. Frank told his father what he had told his brother. He couldn't move. Frank was taken back home as carefully as possible and Capt. Fellows sent for a doctor. The doctor sent for a surgeon. The next day, an operation revealed that the fall had shattered Frank's neck. It was hopeless.

Frank Fellows, known as a popular, intelligent, and hard-working young man and the "mainstay and hope of his parents" was going to die. William Fellows was visiting George in Racine. Fred Fellows was, by then, in Ramsey, Michigan. Telegrams were sent to the scattered siblings and they came rushing back to Foscoro (*Ahnapee Record* 1893a; *Door County Advocate* 1893a). The only consolation the family had was that Frank was in no pain and bore "the certainty of the near approach of death with fortitude and resignation". The brothers said their goodbyes. Frank Fellows lingered for over a month, confined to a bed in his parent's home (*Ahnapee Record* 1893b).

Foscoro suffered its share of bad luck over the years. Drought, flood, storm, ice, illness, accident, and tragic death combined to deal the mill, the pier, and the family blow after blow. In late August 1893, nature twisted the knife by delivering an actual plague of locusts.

[grasshoppers] washed ashore in such large numbers that they formed heaps a foot or more in depth on the beach, and the mass caused an obnoxious smell as it decayed under the hot rays of the sun. At Foscoro, so many grasshoppers washed on the beach that the stench from them became unbearable, and Capt. Fellows found it necessary to send a team and have the decaying bodies of the hoppers plowed under the sand" (*Ahnapee Record* 1893c).



*Figure 130: men loading a hay wagon, ca. 1898. Wisconsin Historic Image 111217.*

Despite the events of the year, the mill ran and ships came to call. Work on the former *Tillinghast* continued a little bit at a time and as the season neared its end the still-unnamed vessel was finally ready to launch. Given the meager output of the mill, Foscoro had no need for a steambarge anymore and a change in plans to restore the *Tillinghast's* hull back into a serviceable tug accounted for the delay in completion (*Door County Advocate* 1893b).

Capt. Fellows launched his new tug in early October. The next day, a massive storm rolled across Lake Michigan. The tug, anchored in the shallows, pounded bottom, ripped loose from her moorings, broke apart, and sank. The vessel couldn't be salvaged. There hadn't even been time to name her. Fellows sunk \$3,000 into her (at least \$100,000 in modern currency) (*Door County Advocate* 1893c). There would be no recouping the loss.

### ***Small Business***

Captain Fellows' life at Foscoro was stressful and draining. He and wife Mary lost so much. Besides the physical and emotional injuries, an accounting of identified losses up to the mid-1890s suggests that Foscoro added the modern equivalent of \$570,000 in the expense column of his

books. This total includes purchase of the property, damages to the *Sea Star*, ice damage to the pier, and so on. It does not include the cost of stocking his store each season, which Fellows himself estimated required over a million dollars in modern currency, building his large home, other damages to the pier where dollar amounts are not reported, the money lost when the mill was not running, wages, equipment repair, and so on. As one example, at Casco, choppers were paid the modern equivalent of \$27 per cord of wood chopped (*Ahnapee Record* 1875x). In 1875, one of Foscoro's best years, Fellows shipped 2,000 cords of wood, for a potential season's outlay of \$15,000 in chopper's wages alone (again, in modern currency).

Fellows, of course, would have gotten some of that money back. With luck, the money invested in the pier store returned with some profit gained. Swaty & Son purchased half interest in Foscoro, allowing refund of some of Fellow's initial purchase price. The 2,000 cords of wood should have increased in value once hauled to the piers and put to market, at least theoretically. Rough math gives a possible gross profit of over a quarter of a million dollars in modern currency in cordwood alone in 1875—in line with the values for timber produce reported in the 1880 census. Long-term, however, the market was not in his favor. Twice, Capt. Fellows ran advertisements selling lumber products directly from his mill. In 1882, he charged \$1 per thousand shingles (about \$30 in modern currency). In 1885, he was only able to charge \$0.50 (\$15 in modern currency). His sale point for good roof boards fell over the same interval. Complicating matters, his ability to produce and ship adequate product to cover annual expenses was nearly gone.

Just how bad the previous years had been to Foscoro is demonstrated by the community's entry in the Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1894 and the 1895 plat map of Kewaunee County. The population plummeted from its high of around 250 residents to only 50 people as the mill workers, lumbermen, and other laborers left to find employment elsewhere. C. B. Post still ran his blacksmith shop, but the hotel vanished from the listings. Fellows' mill was still in operation, though no longer under the Fellows Bros. name, and Fellows himself is listed only as a Justice of the Peace and sheep breeder instead of a lumber dealer (Polk & Co. 1895:341).

The Kewaunee County plat map (Rooney and Schleis 1895) omits Foscoro entirely, and lists George Grimmer as the property holder south of the county line rather than Fellows (Figure 131). Grimmer's inclusion in the earlier lawsuits betrays some sort of financial entanglement with Foscoro and Captain Fellows, and it is interesting to note that Grimmer did not retain ownership of the parcel for long before the property reverted back into the Fellows' family hands. It may be that Grimmer stepped in to temporarily purchase the property as a favor to Fellows, much as Grimm briefly sold his farm to a neighbor then bought it back.

Fellows and Post stayed. They kept dabbling in lumber and working their farms. In July 1895, Post went down to the beach near his house and stumbled upon the body of a drowned sailor. Fellows was called and a coroner's jury was empaneled to look into the matter (*Ahnapee Record* 1895b). Captain Fellows, meanwhile, pulled strings with old friends in Madison seeking some sort of stable employment. He was given a job for a time in the Northern Hospital for the Insane (now the Winnebago Mental Health Institute) near Oshkosh (*Ahnapee Record* 1895a, 1897c). The sheep business went well too, but when Fellows imported new stock they came by railroad to Sturgeon





of Wisconsin-Madison, went another direction. He formed a partnership with Manfred Ash and started a small fruit farm at Foscoro, beginning with a patch of six acres and expanding from there. Fellows & Ash specialized in berries: strawberries, red raspberries, black raspberries, and blackberries (*Ahnapee Record* 1896a; 1897a, 1897b; *Algoma Record* 1897). After a time, and even though the berry farm seemed to be doing well, William followed in the footsteps of his brothers, sold off the business, and left Foscoro for a railroad job (*Algoma Press* 1899a). Door County and adjacent regions, meanwhile, embraced fruit just as southern Kewaunee County had embraced dairy.

Only “two or three” families were left in Foscoro by 1898, and Fellows and wife Mary were one of them. Local officials put forward a proposal to close the post office under the grounds that “there is no settlement at Foscoro” (*Algoma Record* 1898a). Captain Fellows, who held the post of postmaster for decades (Figure 132), fought back (*Door County Advocate* 1900). The post office closed anyway and Foscoro died so far as the officials were concerned.

C. B. Post, the blacksmith who ran the only other business in Foscoro, was head of the other family. He left in 1899. Fred Fellows bought his home and the two-acre lot it sat in (*Algoma Record* 1899a). Post moved to Ahnapee, which by then was known by its modern name of Algoma (*Algoma Record* 1899c). In 1903, he relocated to Bagley Junction on the other side of Green Bay and went to work for a man named G. W. Fowles (*Algoma Record* 1903a).

On a summer day in 1906, while riding in his buggy near Walsh, Wisconsin, he passed the home of the Hanson family. Twenty-year-old Herman Hanson was inside his father’s home, checking a rifle and getting it ready to go out and shoot dogs that were causing trouble in the vicinity. The firearm went off, shattering a window. Hanson probably was terrified of the trouble he would get in over the broken glass. Outside, the buggy continued on its way, with Post’s fallen body still onboard. The stray bullet had bounced off a tree and ricocheted into the back of Post’s head (*Algoma Record* 1906). Hanson’s role in the accident was pieced together by the local officials investigating the matter (*Eau Claire Leader* 1906; *Wausau Pilot* 1906). The inquest determined that Hanson was mentally unwell, and he was sent to a local insane asylum. Mrs. Post sued him for \$5,000 (*The Superior Times* 1906).

Hugh Acker, former proprietor of the Foscoro House, opened a boarding house in Algoma in 1894 and divided his time between that city and northern Door County (*Ahnapee Record* 1894a, 1894b). He later relocated to Appleton. He was still working at the age of 70 as a filer in a lumber mill (United States Census 1920). He died in 1927.

Captain Fellows and Mary stayed in their big house on Stoney Creek. Family and guests came to see them and to entertain and be entertained, just as in times past. They celebrated the Fourth of July, 1901 with another gathering. One of their grandchildren, playing with the fireworks, set the house on fire. The adults put it out and the family headed out into the woods to picnic or otherwise enjoy the day. While they were gone, the fire rekindled and burned their home and the surrounding buildings to the ground. The house and contents thankfully were insured, but only to the tune of



Figure 132: Detail of 1899 plat map of Door County, showing Fellows family properties and post office north of the County line.

just under \$40,000 in modern currency (*Door County Advocate* 1901a, 1901b; *Racine Journal Times* 1901).

With Foscoro abandoned, Captain Fellows and Mary had other vacant buildings to move into, and it seems that they did. Fellows kept on with his sheep farming, and let readers of the *Door County Advocate* know in 1903 that he would “buy anything that eats grass” (*Door County Advocate* 1903).

Fellows dabbled in telephone technology and set up a workshop for his equipment. He became the president of the Farmer’s Telephone Company by 1904 and put up a telephone line between Sturgeon Bay and Algoma (*Door County Democrat* 1904). The mill was used to produce a little lumber here and there, and the remaining buildings were put up for rent. In 1909, one of those buildings burned, leaving the Charles Clark family homeless. The family’s belongings, “several thousand feet” of “nice pine and cedar thoroughly seasoned,” Fellow’s telephone workshop and equipment room, the complex’s hay scales, and farm equipment were inside (*Algoma Record* 1909a).

Fellows’ health declined. He and Mary packed their things and moved to Algoma to be closer to his doctors. He died there only a few years later in 1911 (*Algoma Record* 1911). The various Fellows sons returned one-by-one to Foscoro, settling portions of their father’s land. By then, the properties that Grimmer had taken possession of were back in family hands. Mary Fellows inherited a small, two-acre parcel with a building on it, next to the farmland given to her sons. The building was, in all likelihood, what remained of Foscoro House.

William, perhaps the most in tune with changing economic conditions, transformed some of the surviving buildings into summer cottages in an attempt to plug into the region’s burgeoning tourist industry (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1925). Stoney Creek farm was given over to George. He settled in with wife Lucy and took up the life of a farmer. Advertisements for Stoney Creek Farm ran frequently in the *Algoma Record* in subsequent years, offering pigs or cattle for sale. Lucy died

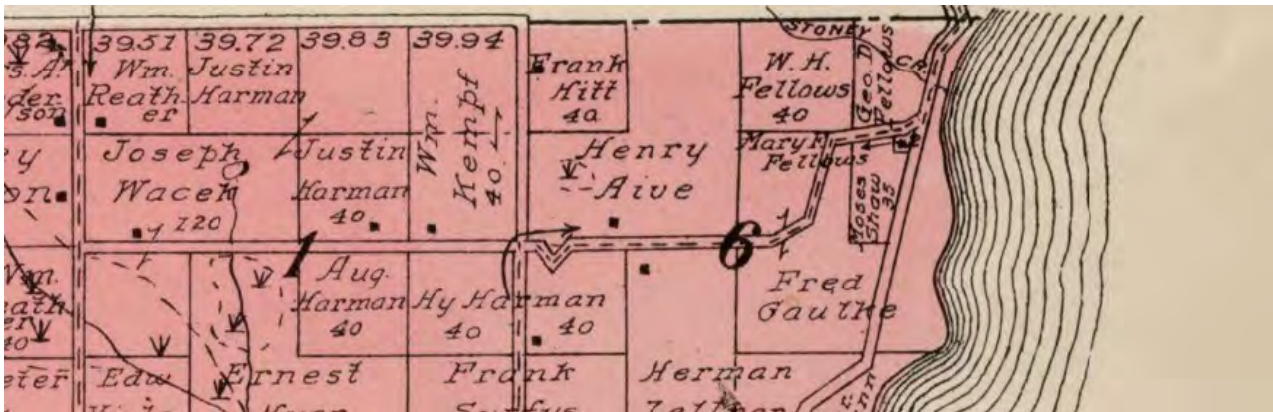


Figure 133: Detail of 1911 plat map showing Fellows properties in Kewaunee County (Ogle & Co. 1912).

there. George Fellows followed her eight years later, struck down by a heart attack in his new dairy barn in 1933 (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1933b).

Ten years before Foscoro claimed its last victim, in 1923, William was cleaning a wall in one of the last buildings when the fragments of a mural appeared. Members of the family set to work, picking away layers of whitewash to reveal a painting of a tranquil bay, a fishing boat, and a seaside castle. None remembered seeing the mural before, which is not surprising given that they would have been small children or not yet born when Foscoro House hosted travelers and thirsty mill hands and the mural entertained the eyes of its guests. News of the find made the papers and shone a spotlight on Foscoro's demise:

Of all the village that stood there then, only the Fellows cottages remain. Fire razed most of the buildings as they fell into ruin and the tall grass has buried the boulder foundations... Two ruts trail down through the brambles, flanked by shrubs and overhanging branches, leading from the main highway to the site of the old village... There where once the saw mill whined, where the couples danced till the early morning, where one man once killed another in a saloon brawl, where the boats called for cargoes of ties and posts is now only a level plat of ground, green carpeted, with two cottages to mark the site. And the waves of Michigan washing on the beach seem to croon of the flight of time (*Algoma Record-Herald* 1923c).

## Chapter Thirteen

# Ghosts of Kewaunee County

On the surface, the story of the lost ports of Kewaunee County is a story of short-term thinking. Strangers came where they were not wanted, drove away people who had lived sustainably in the Great Lakes region since time immemorial, stripped the land of its bounty faster than that bounty would or could replenish itself, and paid the price. That surface-level reading is true, but it is not the whole truth, nor is it the whole story.

The Menomoni, Potawatomi, and other peoples who lived within Wisconsin's first lost coastal communities did change their environment, to be certain. They shaped the earth into ridged farm fields, placed fish weirs and traps across the streams, and set fires to open the forests and encourage the growth of berries and other valued plants. However, the Native peoples of Wisconsin shied away from overconsumption, with the notable exception of their work in the European-encouraged fur and lead trades. They did not rely on the accumulation of wealth to elevate their family's prospects or their own social status, nor did they see forest products as pure commodities. They relied on seasonal resources that replenished themselves over short timescales. The environment they lived within was the environment they believed the Creator intended to exist, and a good life was a life lived in balance and harmony with that Creation.

The Yankee speculators and squatters who followed were raised in a different world. Their economy was market-based and steeped in the capitalistic ideals of the Enlightenment. To them, manufacturing, industry, scientific agriculture, and man's dominion over nature were the hallmarks of a thriving and civilized society. Every physical item had monetary value. Many believed in or were influenced by an interpretation of Calvinism in which material success was seen as a sign of favor from God, and only by working to gain that success would one know if salvation awaited.

The European immigrants who came to Kewaunee County's shores came from many societies and cultures, but all came from a continent where many resources were forbidden or in short supply. Acquisition and ownership of those resources brought security and the ability to determine one's own fate. In Wisconsin, they found those same resources in seemingly unlimited quantities and, because they were not being used by the Native residents in any way that Europeans recognized, seemingly going to waste. As Cronon (1983) notes, the sheer abundance of the New World worked against sustainability. The presence of what seemed to be 'free' wealth, combined with the apparent inexhaustibility of timber, fish, fur, land, and so on, led to carelessness around their use.

Not everyone was blasé about the scope of the lumber boom. Dana (1866) sounded clear warnings when he noted that the forests were being cut faster than they could regrow. Contemporary newspaper accounts reveal that many of the people living in Kewaunee County prior to the Great Fire expected that the forests would be removed in their entirety, and then the land would revert to a 'wilderness' of tangled slash and stumps. They predicted that the county's residents would simply move on to areas that had not yet been ravaged. The Great Fire, which was itself a direct result of careless overconsumption and short-term thinking, changed things by clearing the cut-over and removing the stumps, which made the county easier to convert to farmland.

Most of the non-Native settlers of the coastal counties believed that they were making the world a better place. They created wealth. They created industry. They helped to build the cities of the Midwest. The immigrants who came to Kewaunee County's shores came from European landscapes that had been tamed and cultivated for millennia. Their heads were full of folklore that warned them against going into the deep, dark woods. In their childhoods, they hid under blankets when the wind howled the chorus of the Wild Hunt or listened with wide eyes while grown-ups told stories of monsters, wicked fae, witches, and big bad wolves. And then they came to Wisconsin, where the forests were ancient and deep and home to people they did not understand and were just as frightened of. Oien's terrified wife, left alone and starving for days in a ramshackle cabin in the shade of a cedar grove did not see the value of the forests, nor of the people who lived there first. To her, every tree cut was light let in and monsters pushed further away. She likely never realized that to the Black Earth Potawatomi, she was the monster in the woods.

The transition from forest to farm would have happened whether lumbering arrived first or not. There were too many colonists and immigrants seeking futures and farmland to pass the coastal counties by. They fled war. They fled poverty. They fled oppression. They fled stagnation. They sought prosperity and happy lives, and in trying to achieve those things unthinkingly traded all of the unwanted ills of their old lives to the peoples who welcomed them to their new ones. The vignette of St. Peters, cooking and watching the firelit faces of his wife and children at Sandy Bay, feeling the curious and apprehensive stares of silent men who had a lot to lose by his presence on the back of his head, encapsulates the conflict—a quiet moment at the forest's edge when two worlds softly collided. St. Peters surely worried for his family in those minutes, just as the watchers wondered about the safety of theirs, but he did not turn back when the morning light arrived. There was work to be done, a new life to make, and a new world to build.

## ***Comparisons***

The lost port communities straddled the borders between many worlds. They linked land to lake, forest and farm to growing cities, and the worlds of the First Peoples with the worlds of the United States and Europe. Each rural community confronted similar challenges along the way. Each was established to ship (and often manufacture) timber products. Workers arrived, customer bases were created, and subsidiary businesses and services were set up to cater to both the small population at the complex and the larger rural area that fed it. As nearby timber was harvested, the infrastructure that fed the complex extended out to its limit seeking new supplies. When that limit was reached, the complex went into decline. New sources of income were sought, but none were able to support a population as large as lumbering. The complex shut down and fell into ruin. The residents left.

Despite this shared arc, the details of life at each port community were different. Each faced specific obstacles and opportunities and was battered (or blessed) by fortune. How a complex's owners and residents navigated events determined the swiftness of its fate. Some did well. Some did not. Many suffered from self-inflicted wounds.

Dean's Pier was the most successful of the ghost ports. It was the only one of Kewaunee County's lost coastal communities to succeed itself to death. Its staff and owners had a clear understanding of the changes sweeping over the region and made a conscious effort to stay well ahead of them at



every turn. Dean's Pier, particularly in its later iteration as Carlton, emphasizes the importance of the human factor. Its founders provided it with a good managerial system and a modernized infrastructure. They set up offices staffed by owners on-site and at the markets in Chicago, and hired skilled, competent, and intelligent staff. Without the foresight of Ed Bach and the enthusiasm and innovation displayed by the tight-knit members of the good-natured and well-respected Bach, Kieweg, and Dishmaker families, Carlton would not have survived nearly as long as it did. Those families *were* Carlton, and when prosperity took them to Kewaunee and the railroad line, Carlton suffered a mortal blow.

Foscoro is a dark counterpoint to Dean's Pier. An odd mix of half-heartedness and stubbornness surrounds the community as it appears in historic records. Rather than modernizing, expanding, or diversifying, the Fellows family clung to their water-powered mill even as the stream that powered it dwindled into uselessness. They opted for cost-cutting and procrastination. They took years to finish rebuilding what was left of the tug *Tillinghast*. They purchased an old and problem-ridden schooner. They let their pier pilings settle into the lake bottom on their own rather than driving them in. They failed to adequately stock their store or advertise, etc. Some of these decisions were forced by lack of funds, but not all. Where the sons of Carlton stepped up to take on the challenges handed to them by their fathers, the sons of Foscoro left one after the other, only returning when Foscoro was dead.

Foscoro also highlights the importance of luck. Foscoro suffered more damage from ice shoves than any of the other piers. Multiple buildings were lost to fire at various times, including Isaac Orell's home (with his children inside) and Captain Fellows' beautiful house. Fellows' son died in a tragic accident and storms destroyed his ships. Fellows bought the property at exactly the wrong time, nearly losing everything in the panic of 1872, and loss after loss drained his bank accounts after he had built them back again. The final years of the community's productive lifespan took place amidst lawsuits.

Grimm's Pier never had the funding nor the economic base to get off the ground as a discrete community. Despite mention of a business partner very early in the community's history, indications are that the Grimm family went along alone. If a partner existed, he was an absent or hidden partner. The fact that the pier operated as long as it did could be seen as a success on that basis. The pier was poorly sited, however, within a field of submerged hazards that posed problems for the schooners and steamers that came to call. With other and safer options within sight Grimm had stiff competition for lake-borne traffic. Grimm made the wise decision to fold when the pine boom waned and found success running hotels in Kewaunee County's harbor towns.

Sandy Bay, the oldest of the lost port communities, is a study in contrasts. There is no sign that the McNally family ever formed a commercial partnership. They ran the mill until age betrayed them. McNally was famous for never leaving his farm for long, with the notable exception of his time serving in the Civil War. Sandy Bay was his home. Pfister & Vogel, however, transformed Sandy Bay into a commercial export point in service to a far larger industrial-scale organization. It was a footnote to their main complex in Milwaukee and their branch tannery in Two Creeks. John Waegli, who served as the resident manager on behalf of Pfister & Vogel, was pulled back and forth between those worlds. His attention was divided between Two Creeks and other matters even

after he purchased the Sandy Bay complex. The McNally family retired, as Grimm had, to the hospitality industry. Waegli had no such backup plans in place when the timber ran out.

Alaska and Langworthy piers were never meant to last. They were founded as export points in service to local commercial interests, though for different reasons. Alaska Pier was a branch store with a pier and lumber dealership attached. Mashek, Hitchcock, and Johnson claimed the spot before anyone else could in order to capture a wider mercantile market. When the lumber ran out, the commercial center at Alaska Corners stole the local spotlight. It provided a more stable economic footing based on milling, drinking, and hospitality, and so the population center shifted there. Langworthy was a pier with a store attached, served by a pier road that stretched for miles, built specifically to solve Casco's transport problem. When better alternatives presented themselves, the problem went away and so did Langworthy.

Sprague and Silver Creek, two short-lived piers, were doomed to fail from the start. Without adequate financing they didn't weather the economic uncertainty that characterized early lumber shipping on the Great Lakes. There are signs of mismanagement and absent or unreliable business partners at both locations.

## ***Piers***

Each pier community was founded at a point where a creek or small stream enters Lake Michigan. The water flowing into the lake was impounded with earthen and wooden dams. The resulting ponds served to bank timber and, at Sandy Bay, Langworthy, and Foscoro, to power mills. The size of the streams did not determine the order in which the pier communities were founded. Rather, lumbering spread northward with colonization, and the larger drainages were chosen first in each area from south to north. Sprague's Pier and Sandy Bay were supplied from Manitowoc and Two Rivers. Dean's Pier, Grimm's Pier, Alaska, and Langworthy received support from Kewaunee. Foscoro's founder came from Ahnapee and was supplied from Sturgeon Bay.

All of the piers needed to fulfill their primary mission: allow goods to be transported from shore to ship and *vice versa*. The repeated mention of stockpiles of goods lost when pier sections were destroyed by ice or storm makes it likely that they served secondary roles as lumberyards. The Kewaunee County piers were built using piles. Poor preservation and the effects of rebuilding make it difficult to generalize, but three-pile bents seem to have been favored along with supplementary guard piles. The central supports of each bent may have been doubled. Double pilings are present at Dean's Pier and Alaska Pier, and the single central support piling found at Sandy Bay is a double piling. However, these doublings may have been artifacts of rebuilding episodes. The surviving pilings at the four relocated piers are all around one foot in diameter, though some smaller diameter pilings (0.5 and 0.75 feet) are present at Dean's Pier as well.

The surviving pier segments at Sandy Bay, Dean's Pier, and Grimm's Pier are between 40–45 feet wide. Most, if not all of the post-Civil War piers had a wider end where horse teams turned around. The 1876 plat map specifically depicts Sandy Bay and Dean's Pier with 'T'-shaped ends, similar to the piers then extant in Kewaunee. This configuration is confirmed by an old photo of exposed pilings at Sandy Bay, held in the Kewaunee Historical Society. Dean's pier was wide enough to accommodate a granary. To the north, Grimm's Pier, Alaska Pier, and Langworthy Pier are

depicted with ‘double-width’ ends, a feature documented at Langworthy, where the outer reaches of the pier were 60 feet wide. Foscoro’s pier is shown in an ‘L’-shaped configuration, with a loading platform or building support extending to the south. No evidence of these platforms survive Grimm’s Pier or Alaska Pier, and no pier remnants at all were found at Langworthy or Foscoro.

Historic accounts confirm that loads were transported directly onto the piers by horse-drawn wagon, with the exception of Foscoro, where wooden rails and carts were used. The horse team that turned on each other at Alaska Pier in 1869 was unhitched on the pier, for reasons unknown (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869q). Another 1869 account from Alaska Pier describes workers moving a wagon full of tan bark on the pier prior to unloading it, and maneuvering so close to the edge that the wagon struck a piling (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869n). Waegli and his sons used a single team of horses to pier a season’s worth of wood products onto Sandy Bay pier in 1877. Their involvement suggests that they had customers drop wood off on the top of the bluff near the store, then pried it themselves. That same year Matthias Kremmel lost a team of horses when they bolted after coming down the incline to Grimm’s Pier. Since Kremmel owned the horses and suffered for their loss, Kremmel’s incident suggests that Grimm had customers or independent haulers deliver their products directly to or onto the pier in contrast to the process at Sandy Bay.

The need to safely maneuver wagons and horse teams on the piers determined how wide they needed to be. The nature of each area of the shoreline and the types of ships the pier operators wished to attract determined how long the piers needed to be. The builders at Langworthy, who made a play to facilitate steamers, needed to extend their pier out nearly 2,000 feet to reach the required depth of water for those ships in that area. In general, shorter piers sufficed for the southern Kewaunee County coast and longer piers were needed to the north. Builders tended to underestimate how much pier was needed at first, and lengthened them later. Foscoro, which operated with only a damaged stump of a pier for many years and barely any pier at all late in its life, bucked this trend.

The lengths of Sprague’s pier and the Silver Creek pier are not known, but both were likely in the 600–800-foot range. Similarly, the full lengths of Dean’s pier and the Sandy Bay pier were not recorded. Based on the surviving pilings and historic accounts they were probably at the upper end of that range or longer. Sandy Bay pier underwent an extension of 400 feet in 1874 which may have taken it out to the 1000-foot mark. Grimm’s pier was first built to a length of 660 feet, then extended to 1,060 feet in 1869. Alaska pier originally was built to a length of 800 feet, then extended to 1,010 feet in 1869. Langworthy was intended to be an 800-foot pier; construction didn’t stop, however, until it was 1,830 feet long. Foscoro was originally built to a length of 850 feet and might have been extended out to 1,350 feet.

The piers were built long enough to allow ships to call safely, but there was a limit to how far out the builders were willing to go. Ships that tied up at the ends of the long piers were exposed to sudden squalls, rough seas, and high winds. On multiple occasions, ship captains found that the water was deep enough in calm conditions but not in unsettled ones. If there was time, smart captains halted loading, cast off, and tried to move into deeper water or run for the nearest harbor. There wasn’t always time and captains weren’t always smart. The *Sea Star* met her end at the Clay

Banks pier in just such a situation. She was caught by a ferocious storm while half-loaded, and the waves heaved onto the pier itself.

Ships collided with the piers even in good weather, to the point that builders at some piers put in ‘guard’ piles to keep the vessels that came to call from rubbing against the main structure. Damage to the piers came from everything from minor bumps to major collisions. The *Sunrise* ran straight through the Langworthy pier in 1876 and cut it into two pieces. Mother Nature did the worst damage. Dean’s pier burned in a wildfire in 1864, was likely damaged by ice in 1873, was partially demolished by ice in 1881, and was damaged by storm in 1883. Grimm’s pier was nearly demolished by ice in 1873. Langworthy pier suffered ice damage in 1873 and storm damage in 1876. Sandy Bay may have been hit by ice in 1873. Ice removed sections of Foscoro’s pier in 1873, 1881, twice in 1883, 1885, and 1886. In addition, part of the pier fell over on its own in 1883. The cost of each disaster ranged from thousands to tens of thousands of dollars in modern currency.

Piers needed regular repair. Normal wear-and-tear took its toll apart from accidents and natural disasters, and foremen and managers sometimes decided that piers needed to be modified. John Waegli, manager of the Sandy Bay complex, was a skilled carpenter, and the Dishmaker family at Carlton had extensive blacksmithing and wagon-making expertise that was turned towards pier upkeep. Laborer Charles Arpin’s first job at Dean’s Pier was pier construction. Casco’s mill actually shut down for a time because all of the workers were busy building Langworthy pier.

Specialized equipment, such as steam pile drivers, was needed for some aspects of pier construction. Henry Gibson, a Manitowoc builder who erected many of Kewaunee’s piers, “and at one time or another has repaired all the rest of them,” was one of the main contractors in the region (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1880c). George R. Roberts, one of the members of Roberts & Johnson and a late owner of Sprague’s pier, was another (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1871e). Hiring a pile driver added numbers to a port community’s expense column, so a few owners tried saving money by buying their own. C. B. Fay, co-owner of the Langworthy Pier, bought his from Ahnapee and later sold it to Stebbins & Boalt for work at their pier at Whitefish Bay in Door County (*Ahnapee Record* 1878g). The Fellows family tried doing without at Foscoro, unwisely trusting their piles to sink firmly on their own, but petitioned George Grimmer for help procuring one for their pier at Clay Banks.

An integral part of each pier was the pier road. These roads linked the piers to the mainland complexes and to the terrestrial transportation system. The mysterious description of Foscoro written by ‘Jeannie’ mentions a “wooden railroad” linking the mill to the pier (*Daily Milwaukee News* 1871) and Two Creeks pier in Manitowoc County is known to have been connected to a three-mile section of rail line (Wojta 1941). A similar rail system was used at Ronk’s Pier in Ozaukee County. A stretch of corduroy road ran three miles inland from Dean’s Pier. Along most of the coastline (Foscoro being an exception) the roads dropped in elevation by up to fifty feet at the edge of the beach. The bridge portion of each bridge pier reduced the amount of descent needed to access the piers, which were raised above the beaches in any case. At Dean’s Pier and Sandy Bay, the descent was made more gradual by routing the pier roads down into adjacent ravines. Similar tactics may have been followed at Grimm’s pier, Alaska, and Langworthy. Even

so, the wheels of laden wagons had to be chained on the downslope at Grimm's pier and the incline still was sharp enough to cause loads to shift occasionally at Dean's Pier.

At most rural ports the piers were intended for the use of the owners. That did not mean that other ships didn't come to call. The Goodrich steamers were welcome wherever they could tie up. Being a steamer stop in the mid to late-1800s was like living on a bus or rail line. Goodrich steamers didn't just haul freight, they carried passengers. Passengers bought things, needed hotel rooms, and enjoyed drinks in local taverns. Passenger lines meant easy travel to and from the cities, and additional opportunities to ship goods back and forth. For Captain Fellows, the Foscoro pier brought pierage. He charged other merchants and lumber dealers to use his pier and is the only owner of a rural port in Kewaunee County recorded as allowing other businesses to do so.

### ***Pier Complexes***

None of the lost ghost ports were towns or villages as we recognize them today. They had no government of their own and were subject to the Town Boards of their respective townships—units of government used in rural areas of Wisconsin, generally encompassing an area of 36 square miles, more or less. Sometimes, the pier owners or managers served on those Boards. More properly, the rural ports were privately-owned industrial and commercial complexes that included workers housing and supported a few dependent but independent businesses. Though schools, churches, or social venues were sometimes located nearby, those institutions served the wider population of the Township and thus were rarely 'in town', so to speak. Foscoro had a recorded maximum population of 250 residents at its peak and populations of 50 people are recorded for both Foscoro and Dean's Pier/Carlton in their later years.

Though never much of a presence with regard to population, the port communities had outsized economic impacts. Pier stores kept the surrounding region supplied. Subsidiary operations like blacksmith shops and wagon shops provided valuable services. Pier owners and managers invested in infrastructure that benefited the population at large: post offices, telegraph offices, roads, and bridges. Pier offices and cheese factories provided markets for the sale of wood products and agricultural produce, and the complexes employed men that lived throughout the wider region. The ghost ports were rural places that served rural populations.

### ***Main Street***

Each complex had its own 'main street' where the pier store and other businesses were located. Dean's Pier, Sandy Bay, Grimm's Pier, Langworthy, and Foscoro stretched along the lakeshore road. Alaska had an unusually long pier road, and the complex seems to have been situated south of the pier road and linked to the lakeshore road and pier road by roads not shown on existing maps.

The most important building in each community was the pier store, which generally stood at a prominent location on 'Main Street' rather than near the pier. Stores were where customers bargained over the sale point for timber and farm produce, bought goods, and settled accounts. Stores were where the telegraph and post offices were set up, though Captain Fellows moved



Foscoro's post office into his own home for a time. Stores doubled as social spaces, lecture halls, and offices, and even provided housing for bachelor brothers.

Dean's Pier/Carlton's store is the best documented. The whitewashed wood frame store was repainted, refurbished, and expanded over time, and there are brief mentions of stores being remodeled at several other pier communities. Foscoro had two stores: one run by the Fellows family and one run by Swaty & Son. Sandy Bay's store jumped from one side of the lakeshore road to another if the plat maps are accurate. Pier stores were stocked with a varied array of items, including clothing, tools, cookware, foodstuffs, and farming goods.

Independent businesses were distributed either along 'Main Street' on the outskirts of the pier complexes, or some distance away on the inland roads. The presence of a population of working men and the possibility of stops by Goodrich steamers attracted the proprietors of inns or hotels. Since 'Main Street' was also usually on the stage line between the harbor towns, some inns and hotels were able to do double duty as stage stops. Smaller establishments like Lakeside House were the 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of bed and breakfasts. Others, like Foscoro House, included space for saloons and dance halls. Though nominally separate businesses, they were dependent on the pier complexes and often had ties to them. Hugh Acker, who established the Foscoro House at Foscoro, started out as the manager of the Foscoro mill working under Captain Fellows. John McNally, proprietor of Lakeside House, was the original owner of the Sandy Bay pier.

Larger inns had a mix of public gathering spaces and private rooms. The 1875 murder at Foscoro House took place in just such a private room and one wonders just how rowdy the Foscoro House was that a gunshot in the night didn't bring people running immediately. A similar inn, the Eagle House, was run by C. I. Hitt at nearby Clay Banks in Door County. Alaska had no recorded saloon of its own, but the complex was only a mile and a half from Burke's hotel and the Deillof saloon at the crossroads at Alaska Corners. Sandy Bay is reported to have had a saloon of its own, but no contemporary references to it were found by the authors, save for a later 1891 notation after the demise of the lumber complex stating that "...nor is there any store or saloon and the Blue Ribbon Hall is deserted" (*New Era* 1891). Lore states that Dean's Pier boasted an inn and hotel run by the Feldman family prior to the wildfire of 1864, but its later incarnation as Carlton was dry. A hotel appears about a mile down the road to the timberlands from Carlton on the 1876 plat map. If it didn't contain a saloon, then Carltonites wishing to drown their sorrows had to travel to Kewaunee or a thirsty seven miles inland to the tavern at Piwrenc's grist mill.

There is a strong association between the owners of the pier communities and the hospitality industry. As noted, the early inn at Dean's Pier and Foscoro House operated as hotels. A mysterious hotel appears on the 1876 plat map of the Town of Carlton on the Sidel farm (J. Knauber & Co. 1876). That hotels existed at or near some of the pier complexes is not a surprise. They were natural stopping points for travelers. Passengers disembarking from steamers or other lake-going vessels needed places to rest and get their land-legs back before continuing their trips. The surprising connection is how many owners were in the hospitality business before founding their pier communities and how many entered it in retirement.

Edward Decker, co-owner of the Langworthy pier, established a hotel in Menasha before coming to Kewaunee County. The lore surrounding Silver Creek has Zebina and Katherine Shaw running

the Tremont House in Ahnapee for a time. Vojta Mashek managed and then purchased the Wisconsin House in Kewaunee. Captain Fellows opened a hotel in Ahnapee managed by wife Mary and his father-in-law before they moved to Foscoro. John McNally and wife converted their own home into a stage stop and hotel after running the Sandy Bay mill became too much for them. When Henry Grimm gave up on his pier, he moved to Kewaunee and bought the River Side House. Later on, Grimm relocated to Ahnapee and bought and managed the Ahnapee House there. Both ventures were reportedly far more successful than his pier had been.

### *Industry*

The primary industrial buildings at rural pier communities were mills. Steam mills were set up at Dean's Pier/Carlton and at Sprague's Pier. The mills at Foscoro, Langworthy, and Sandy Bay ran on water power. The Foscoro mill was powered by a Leffel wheel and a waterwheel was used at the Baldwin mill at Langworthy. Lore says that there was a mill at Silver Creek, but the type is not specified and milled lumber is absent from the sole list of imports conclusively linked to the community (there were other Silver Creeks on the shores of Lake Michigan). No mill is reported for Grimm's Pier, nor for Alaska Pier. Langworthy's mill ran only very early and very late in its history; through most of its lifespan Langworthy was fed by the mills in Casco instead.

Grist mills operated for various short periods of time at Dean's Mill/Carlton, Foscoro, and Langworthy. The grist mill at Dean's Mill/Carlton was the first. It does not seem to have survived the wildfire of 1864. Foscoro had one early in its lifespan, but Fellows must have shut it down since he discussed opening another a decade later. Baldwin opened a grist mill near the end of Langworthy's period of operation. The Foscoro and Langworthy grist mills presumably were powered by water. Whether the grist mill at Dean's Mill was steam or water powered is unclear.

Since the mills were dependent upon water for banking logs and/or providing power, they were located in or on the very edges of the ravines in each complex. McNally's sawmill was on the south side, on his half of the Sandy Bay complex. At least one of the three mills built at Dean's Mill/Carlton, if the feature found next to the pier road is indeed a mill, stood on the north side. Foscoro's sawmill was on the south side. The positions of the other mills are not known. Each would have been located at or within sight of the earthen and wooden dams that pooled up the community mill pond.

Nearby, and apparently within sight of 'Main Street' were the pieryards. Passing newspaper correspondents frequently commented on the amount of business being done, and noted whether the yards were full or empty. The placement of lumber and timber storage areas along the main road, and most likely near the store, makes sense given that the store was where customers were encouraged to call to sell shingles, posts, ties, and other timber products manufactured on local farms. Other yards were certainly present next to the mills and on the piers themselves.

Blacksmiths and carpenters were in residence at most, if not all, of the lost ports. Each complex had mill machinery and wagons to repair, horses that needed to be shod, and piers that needed to be rebuilt periodically. Carpenters came from the surrounding area as John Whitaker did, were pulled from the population of mill workers, lumberjacks, or owners, or were hired in as needed. Some, like Isaac Orell, doubled as millwrights and were able to contract themselves out to

different communities. Their shops should have been situated near the mills and/or piers where wood and wood working tools were ready at hand. The presence of numerous woodworking file fragments and a possible woodworking or blacksmithing tool on the McNally side of the Sandy Bay complex near the McNally mill supports this assertion.

Blacksmith shops were situated on the fringes of the community but were still very much a part of it. Census records indicate that the blacksmiths who lived at Dean's Pier/Carlton were often neighbors to the owners and foremen. They lived in their own homes instead of shared worker's housing. Company ownership of the post-Poser/pre-Dishmaker smithy is implied in the 1866 description of the complex published in the *Omro Union*, as it is part of the 'business' that Dean and Taylor were occupied with (*Omro Union* 1866). The blacksmith shop shown on the north edge of Carlton on the 1912 plat map of Kewaunee County was located on the former Dishmaker farm, and if it was built by the Dishmakers then that shop was entirely their own holding (Ogle & Co. 1912). C. B. Post's blacksmith shop appears as an independent business in the listing for Foscoro.

A wagon shop was located at Dean's Pier/Carlton from the earliest days of business there. Run by Fred Poser, it changed hands after the Civil War and eventually wound up in the hands of Poser's brother-in-law John Dishmaker, Sr. Poser and Dishmaker both worked as blacksmiths for the Dean's Pier/Carlton community, but the extent to which intervening blacksmiths worked at the wagon shop is unclear. The Dean's Pier/Carlton wagon shop is also listed amongst the Dean & Taylor concerns in the 1866 account (*Omro Union* 1866). A new wagon shop opened at Dean's Pier/Carlton in 1876, and again company ownership of the business was implied. The shop did not just supply the needs of the complex. It also sold wagons of various types to the surrounding community, and by all accounts was well patronized.

Carlton's cheese factories eventually eclipsed the community's mill and pier store in terms of economic importance, and certainly outshone the community's blacksmith and wagon shops. The later cheese factory was located on 'Main Street' near the community store, facing it on the opposite side of the road. The early factory building probably stood nearby. Photographs of the later building show a substantial two-story structure with a can hoist system. The only other lost port to make the leap into cheese manufacture was neighboring Sandy Bay. Waegli either repurposed the original store there and remade it into a cheese factory late in the complex's history or tore down the original store building and put a cheese factory in its place. If the scatter of artifacts noted north of the ravine during the 2023 surveys is what is left of Sandy Bay's store/cheese factory, then it stood a short distance back from 'Main Street', between the lakeshore road and the lake bluffs.

The cheese factories operated in a quasi-independent role. The Carlton factory 'bought' milk from the Company farm despite being under Company ownership, but also purchased milk from the surrounding community. The Carlton cheesemakers boarded with the owners and/or foremen instead of owning their own homes. In later years, the Carlton cheese factory was sold off and became an independent business, changing hands multiple times before it finally shut down. The final owner of the Sandy Bay complex owned and built the Sandy Bay cheese factory building, but he leased it to others. The last reported tenants were Crosbymeyers, a Chicago cheese company (*Algoma Press* 1900).

The industrial facilities at each complex surely included a number of other support buildings such as sheds, stables, barns, workshops, warehouses, granaries, privies, and so forth, but none appear on any of the available maps for the ghost ports. Carlton boasted an icehouse, which should have been set up near the cheese factory. The support buildings would have clustered around the mills, timber storage yards, and pier road. At least some of the buildings were positioned out on the piers, like the granary at Dean's Pier/Carlton.

### *Residential Areas*

The residential areas of the lost ports fall into three categories: owner/manager housing, employee housing, and farmsteads. The more important residents of the communities lived in private homes, though they sometimes shared residences with one another and with other workers. The wealthiest put up show homes. Captain Fellow's house at Foscoro and the Bach home at Carlton received newspaper coverage and were lauded for their architecture and landscaping. The homes of the local upper-crust were sometimes near the pier store, and as in the case of Fred Bach in his bachelor days might be within the store itself. Grimm's home might have been one and the same with the store since only a single structure is depicted on plat maps. The main Bach residence seems to have been sited on the south side of the mill pond at Carlton, not far from the store and cheese factory, and census records suggest that Kieweg's home was nearby. C. B. Fay's home was near the Langworthy store along the main road. McNally's home was near his mill, while Waegli's house was near the store(s)/cheese factory.

At Foscoro and Alaska Pier the owner/manager's homes were located on the fringes of their respective communities, somewhat away from the noise and bustle of the mills and pieryards. Fellows' massive house stood on the lake bluffs on the north side of Foscoro. Kwapil's later home was on the southern fringe of the Alaska complex, but he began his career in more humble housing in the midst of the community.

Skilled workers sometimes lived in the big houses with the owners and managers. In 1880, cheesemaker Nic Kuffan boarded with foreman Wenzel Kieweg's family. If the same arrangement held for Kuffan's successor Alfred Arpin, it may explain his subsequent engagement and marriage to Kieweg's daughter. Clerks John B. Dishmaker, Jr. and Joseph Schultz shared a home with owner Fred Bach and family. John B. Dishmaker Jr., *was* family as he was Ed and Fred Bach's nephew. The cheesemaker for Carlton during the period of Rudebeck ownership lived in the owner's house as well. Blacksmiths, as noted, tended to own their own homes.

Most worker's housing was more humble. In 1860, Dean & Borland employed 24 men at the mill at Dean's Pier, while Sprague & Owens employed 19 at Sprague's Pier and H. Ritter employed 10 men at the mill at Sandy Bay (United States Census 1860). Based on population estimates, Foscoro at its peak in the 1870s may have employed as many as 30 men, on par with the workforce at Davidson's mill and shipping port nearby in Door County (United States Census 1870). The workers took lodging in several different ways.

Fellows owned six workmen's homes in Foscoro and rented out space in his buildings as late as the 1900s, when a single building being used for family lodging and storage caught fire and burned down. Whether these homes were single-family units or shared units is undetermined. The houses

were lined up along ‘Main Street’, near the mill and pier. An account of a fire in a workmen’s house at Dean’s Pier/Carlton in 1875 confirms that multiple men roomed together there (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875c). Carlton’s worker’s housing was close enough to the store for Fred Bach to sneak over seeking help on the night of the attempted break-in, but far enough away that the presence of so many men didn’t deter the thieves, so may have been located near the mill and pier as well.

Other workers stayed in boarding houses. Foscoro had a large boarding house. E. B. Dean’s parents managed one at his mill and pier, and Ed Bach roomed there for a time along with another clerk, laborers, and a likely servant girl. The residents of the boarding houses probably were bachelors, men traveling or working away from their families, or transient workers. Workers who had families of their own needed more substantial private housing, and some found it on farms of their own. Isaac Orell, Foscoro’s millwright/carpenter, lived in just such a home on a forty-acre parcel. Neighbor and fellow Foscoroite Joseph Paranto did likewise, as did the Arpin family at Dean’s Pier/Carlton.

### *Company Farms*

The owners and managers of the pier complexes had their own farms to manage. Some were large like the Taylor & Bach show farm. Others were typical family farms like Grimm’s farm. Some were well-integrated into their company’s holdings, and supplied produce to the pier store and the pier. Others, like Fellows’ farm, seem to have been a sideline separate from the port’s business. Fellows was disinterested enough to lease his farm out for a period of years. The contrast between worker’s farms and the owner’s farms is notable. Joseph Paranto and Isaac Orell only tilled five and nine acres out of their forty-acre parcels compared to 100 acres under cultivation on Captain Fellows’ property. McNally eventually had 40 acres under cultivation and Waegli tilled 50. The Taylor & Bach show farm dwarfed them all in terms of size, harvest, and modernization, with hundreds of acres under cultivation and scores more in pasture.

Census records reflect a heavy emphasis on oats, barley, wheat, potatoes, hay, and butter, typical of the place and time. The ‘sugar’ produced at Sandy Bay and Carlton is interesting, as are the apple orchards owned by McNally and Fellows. With regard to livestock, all owned one or more teams of draft animals. Nearly all had a team of oxen (Fellows did not); Grimm and Taylor & Bach each had a team of mules along with their oxen. All but McNally owned at least one horse. Fellows owned fourteen horses in 1880, while Taylor & Bach had seven in 1870 and ten in 1880. Most had one or more milk cows. Taylor & Bach accumulated a sizable dairy herd when they transitioned into cheese manufacture. Before that point, the firm raised sheep. Fellows eventually became fairly well known for his flock in Foscoro. Several of the company farms had a hog or two, and Sandy Bay kept good-sized chicken coops.

The extensive acreage under cultivation at the company farms led to significant harvests, to the tune of hundreds and sometimes thousands of bushels. This produce, along with that taken from the inevitable kitchen gardens, had to be processed and stored. The animals on each farm required barns, coops, fences, of their own, and places to store their feed. Each company farm thus added its own complement of buildings to the port complex, from cattle and sheep barns to chicken coops to equipment barns where mechanical harvesters and threshers were stored to sheds for wagons and

buggies, root cellars, granaries, sheds for potato and apple bins, hog pens, well houses, windmills, and so on. A few of these buildings may be visible behind (south of?) the store at Carlton in Figure 41, grouped around a windmill. Some of the larger farms, like the Taylor & Bach show farm, employed their own teams of workers, who may have needed tenant housing of their own.

### *Public Buildings*

Not all community buildings were located within the lost ports. The Blue Ribbon Hall stood halfway between Sandy Bay and Carlton on the farm of Antoine St. Peters and was shared by the two communities. The Hall was a family-friendly venue for social events, theatrical productions, student exhibitions, dances, and other festivities. The phrase “Blue Ribbon” was a reference to the Blue Ribbon Society, a temperance organization popular in some portions of Kewaunee County. In later years, the Hall and the farm it stood on were purchased by F. J. Drab, who gave the farm the tongue-in-cheek name “the Red Ribbon Farm” (Ogle & Co. 1912). The hall was not, as some accounts stated, deserted in 1891 but continued to host events for many years (e.g., *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1906b). Louise Waegli, sister of Sandy Bay manager John Waegli was in a performance put on there in June of 1882 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882f). Nic Kuffan, a cheesemaker at Carlton, was local president of the Blue Ribbon Society for several years (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1882c). The Hall brought the rural coastal population together and provided them with a safe and socially acceptable outlet for frivolity. Some idea of the impact of the Hall on the pier communities may be given by the fact that Nic Kuffan wound up marrying Louise Waegli.



*Figure 134: Advertisement for event at the Blue Ribbon Hall between Sandy Bay and Carlton (Kewaunee Enterprise 1906b).*

Other elements of the local infrastructure were made necessary by the port communities but were not directly tied to them nor dependent upon them. Schools are documented on the north side of Foscoro, on McNally family land southwest of Sandy Bay, and on the far side of the Taylor & Bach show farm at Carlton. Alaska’s school was just over a mile inland, at Alaska Corners. Langworthy and Grimm’s Pier had no schools associated with them or close to them. Cemeteries were established at the longer-lived and better-populated complexes—a piece of infrastructure sadly needed given the dangerous working conditions and frequent epidemics. Far too many of the children in the schools were laid to rest in the cemeteries.

### *The Ghost Ports and the Lake Trade*

The impact of the small commercial piers on the Great Lakes fleet was significant. Ship captains were employed either directly by the firms that operated the piers or were contracted to them by season or by load. The owners of the vessels made money (barring any incidents) with each trip. Nearly 100 cargoes were loaded and shipped south annually at the busier ports (Dean’s Pier/Carlton and Foscoro) at the height of the boom and a few dozen went out each season at smaller ports such as Grimm’s Pier. Over nine years, Langworthy shipped 360 cargoes for an overall average of forty cargoes per season. There is a clear boom-bust cycle in the shipping



numbers. Carlton shipped out 83 cargoes in 1869 but only 35 in 1879. Foscoro shipped nearly 100 cargoes in 1876, but only 42 in 1884. By the end of Foscoro's productive years, Fellows Bros. were unable to fill the holds and decks of the ships that came to load, forcing the ship's captains to sail to Ahnapee or other ports to finish off.

There is surprisingly little overlap in which ships came to call at which ports. Of the nearly 100 named schooners and scow schooners found in research for this study, only a dozen loaded at more than one port. Some of the dozen, like the *Ithica* and *Driver*, were sold from one hand to another during that period. Others seem to have picked up jobs or cargos where opportunity or need allowed. This unexpected exclusivity hints at the hidden partnerships, contracts, and deals made to move timber from Kewaunee County to the southern Lake Michigan, with particular vessel owners and lumber merchants focusing on specific rural ports to supply their businesses. Company ownership of sailing vessels and company involvement in the urban side of the trade—directly or indirectly like Capt. Fellow's presumed deal with his brother in Racine—is another reason vessels tended to be linked to particular ports.

The major exception to this phenomenon is the Goodrich Line of passenger steamers, which called at Dean's Pier, Foscoro, and other ports as part of their regular rounds and on an as-needed basis. The larger and longer-lived ports attracted more steamers, steam-barges, and propellor ships than earlier and smaller ports.

The following list of named ships is derived from local newspaper accounts. It is only a partial list since the newspapers in Kewaunee and Door Counties did not always document ships calling at the rural ports, and a full review of arrivals and departures in the major shipping cities of Chicago, Milwaukee, and Racine was not attempted for this study. Even the incomplete list, however, shows the scale of interaction between the lost coastal communities of Kewaunee County and the larger lake fleet.

Schooners and Scow Schooners: *A. Baensch, A. Bradley, A. Rust, Alaska, Alwilde, Annie Thorine, Ardent, B. F. Wade, Bates, Belle Laurie, Beloit, Blue Bell, C. C. Butts, C. J. Roeder, C. Harrison, C. North, Carrie, Carrier, Catchpole, Challenge, Charley Hibbard, Charlotte Roab, Christiana, Clara, Crazy Horse, Contest, Conquest, Driver, Dreadnaught, E. G. Gray, E. M. Stanton, E. P. Royce, E. R. Blake, Ella Doak, Emeline, Emily Taylor, Exchange, Forest, Franklin, George E. Purington, Grace Williams, Grant, Gazelle, H. Rand, Hamlet, Hannah Ety, Hawkins, Helen, Hercules, Honest John, Ironsides, Ithica/Ithaca, J. M. Tracy, Josephine Lawrence, Julia Smith, Illinois, Ketchum, Kitty Grant, L. B. Coates, L. Painter, Lady Ellen, Little Bell, M. McVea, Mariner, Mary, Mary Booth, Minnie Mueller, Mocking Bird, Mt. Vernon, Peoria, Ramedary, Regulator, Rival, Rob Roy, Robert B. King, S. C. Irwin, S. G. Andrews, St. Lawrence, Sarah Clouw, Sea Star, Silver Cloud, South Side, Stevens, Success, Swallow, Truesdell, Two Kitties, Tuscola, Venture, W. H. Hawkins, W. H. Hindsdale, W. H. Nelson, White Oak.*

Propellor ships: *De Pere, Lady Franklin, Ludington, St. Joseph,*

Steamers: *Alpena, Chicago, Corona, Manitowoc, Wm Finch.*

Steam barges: *C. P. Heath, D. W. Powers, Daisy Day, Grace Williams, Hilton, Pauly*

Cutters: *Andy Johnson*

Tugs: *B. B. Coe, G. W. Tift, Kitty Smoke, Tillinghast, Union*

Pier owners sometimes doubled as ship's captains or owned—and even built—vessels of their own. John J. Borland bought the *Ithica* to service Dean's Pier in its first years, and E. B. Dean later purchased the schooner *A. Baensch*. J. V. Taylor, another early partner of Dean's, owned several schooners, including the *Floretta*, *Driver*, *Ironsides*, *Perry Hannah*, *Kate Gillett*, *Radical*, and *J. V. Taylor*. The *Driver* was the member of Taylor's fleet 'assigned' to Dean's Pier, but the *Radical* and *Ironsides* came to call as well. Hitchcock & Mashek, owners of Alaska pier, purchased the *H. Rand* and *Beloit*. The Pfister and Vogel Leather Company, owners of the Sandy Bay pier, managed a small fleet, including the schooner *Josephine Lawrence*, which called often at Sandy Bay, and the schooner *Tanner*.

Though J. V. Taylor was an active ship's captain during his time with Dean's Pier/Carlton, and Capt. Zebina Shaw may have been, Captain Fellows had the most intimate association with the lake fleet. His early career was spent as a sailor. Fellows stayed aboard the *Sea Star* during her final hours and was the last to abandon ship. He turned Foscoro into a small shipyard in its later years. The former tug *Tillinghast* and the schooner *Dreadnaught* were rebuilt there.

The *Sea Star* was only one of several vessels that met their ends at the lost ports. Nearly every one of the later rural piers in Kewaunee County saw ships sink or go ashore, and Langworthy pier was cut in two by one. An unnamed vessel sank at Grimm's pier in its first year of operation and was joined afterwards by the schooners *Rival* and *Hercules* and the scow schooner *Swallow*. The latter two wrecks were refloated and towed into Manitowoc for repairs, but the remains of the unnamed schooner and *Rival* are buried beneath the sand along the coastline. The schooner *Mt. Vernon* sank and broke apart just off Dean's Pier in 1869 after striking a shoal, and the schooners *Illinois* and *Driver* ran onto the beach there at different points but were refloated. The tug *Thomas Spears* burned just north of the pier at Sandy Bay, and rests there today. The *Annie Thorine* went down at Alaska pier but was refloated by a tug. Besides the *Sea Star*, the *Daisy* sank and broke apart at Foscoro in 1876, the schooner *Reciprocity* went aground on the reef offshore from Foscoro in 1880, broke up, and washed in, and the *Lady Ellen*, *Mocking Bird*, and *Emily Taylor* went ashore at Foscoro at different times and had to be pulled or lightered free (Boyd et al. 2020).

These incidents underline the risky nature of lake transportation. When the *Alwilde* went down in 1858 she took critical winter supplies for Dean's Pier with her (Wing 1921–1922:38). E. B. Dean's schooner *A. Baensch* sank after a collision with the *Dean Richmond* in 1866, causing the loss of both the vessel and her cargo of store merchandise. Dean sued and managed to recoup the equivalent of \$240,000 in 1869 (*Algoma Record* 1916c; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1869m). The *Sea Star*'s incident-ridden career cost Fellows dearly, and one wonders whether it was worth it to him to have her. That point was made explicitly by the *Door County Advocate* (1884c) when it pointed out that Capt. Fellows could have made only "meager" profit in the 1884 shipping season. Besides the costs of her periodic refurbishments and repaintings, the aging ship suffered frequent damage

and sprang leaks. The *Sea Star*'s 1885 collision in Chicago caused the modern equivalent of over \$30,000 of damage in a few moments, in addition to taking the vessel out of service for some time and preventing the store from being restocked and cargoes sold.

### ***Rich Man, Poor Man...***

The owners and foremen of the rural ports came from varied backgrounds, lived disparate lives, and met an array of fates. A traditional British counting rhyme runs:

*Tinker, Tailor,  
Soldier, Sailor,  
Rich Man, Poor Man,  
Beggar Man, Thief.*

Though the term 'tinker' in the rhyme refers to traveling tinsmiths, the modern American definition of 'tinkerer' certainly fits Fred Bach and his penchant for inventions like Bach's Liquid Measure. There were no tailors among the pier owners and foremen, except in surname only in the form of J. V. Taylor. Many of the men fought as soldiers. John McNally, John J. Borland, Ed Bach, John Dishmaker, Sr., Frank Kwapil, C. B. Fay, and De Wayne Stebbins donned Union uniforms and marched onto the bloody battlefields of the Civil War (or in Stebbin's case, floated). As just noted, several were sailors or lake captains. All were, at least for brief periods, rich. Some, like Zebina Shaw, ended their lives in poverty. By the end, Fellows was reduced to begging for handouts to help his last tenants after they were burned out in the 1909 fire (*Algoma Record* 1909a). Finally, from the point of view of the Native peoples whose land they had appropriated, all were thieves.

Most had prior experience in lumbering, the mercantile business, or the lake trade, and often in all three. Even Foster, who arrived in Wisconsin as a lawyer and worked as a teacher and surveyor, spent a short time in a lumber camp and founded a mill town before setting his sights on Kewaunee County. John McNally, C. L. Fellows, George Roberts, and Zebina Shaw were sailors and fishermen. Mashek, Hitchcock, Johnson, Fay, Sprague, Wells, Valentine, and Decker were merchants. Decker worked as a lumberjack in his early career, as did Foster, briefly. Waegli, Kwapil, Kieweg, Ed and Fred Bach, and the Dishmakers started out as clerks, mill workers, wagon makers, managers, and foremen.

Though not discussed in this volume, nearly all held political office at some time in their lives. John McNally, Zebina Shaw, and C. L. Fellows were content with local positions on Town or school boards. Mashek and Kwapil served as the mayors of Kewaunee and Ahnapee, respectively. Edward Decker was a Wisconsin state Senator and held the position of Kewaunee County Clerk for years. Decker practically controlled politics in Kewaunee County until Hitchcock unseated him and took the County Clerk position for himself.

Their quirks and personality traits were a factor in how each pier complex was run and how long it survived, but the wider commercial networks that each tapped into played a bigger role. The owners of the Ghost Ports can be divided into three categories: independent owners, self-made men, and merchant princes. In some respects, these categories reflect an evolutionary trajectory.

Men came seeking opportunities for their family, accrued wealth, and rose to the top of local society. Not all made it all the way to the top, and some that rose fell back down again. Where the founders were in this continuum at the time they established the lumber complexes helped to determine their later fates and the fates of their ports.

### *Independent Owners*

Independent owners founded their pier communities without the benefit of a solid economic footing. They were all resident owners. Their economic interests were grounded almost entirely in the production of timber products, and their operations were small in scale. While the ease of harvesting and shipping timber from the piers early in the lumber boom combined with lack of immediate competition to give some an initial boost, the independent owners were vulnerable to unforeseen expenses and unstable economic conditions.

John McNally, founder of Sandy Bay, is an excellent example of a successful independent owner. McNally and father-in-law Hugh Ritter set up a farmstead on the lakeshore much other colonists did, but also hired a small force of men to put up a mill dam, build a small pier, and raise and work a small water-powered sawmill. McNally was then canny enough to sell the pier and shipping complex to Pfister & Vogel rather than trying to run the shipping business himself. McNally let Pfister & Vogel take on the expense of improving the pier and the complex's infrastructure, and then used the corporate-funded improvements to benefit his mill. When he could no longer handle the mill in his golden years, he and his wife converted their home into a stage stop/hotel and kept making money.

Other independent owners were not as lucky. Pfister & Vogel's foreman John Waegli took on Sandy Bay as an independent owner in the waning years of the lumber boom. Though Waegli was spared the costs of building the complex, he found very quickly that his boundless energy and Sandy Bay's dwindling income stream weren't enough to keep the complex going. Sandy Bay's workforce dispersed, leaving only a post office and a small, late-founded cheese factory that Waegli leased out.

David Hill and David Baldwin, the first and last mill owners at Langworthy, attempted to go it alone too. Hill was burned out in the Great Fire and accepted Decker's offer to sell out, and Baldwin's business never recovered after a catastrophic flood destroyed the mill. Hill was not an owner long enough to tell how his fortunes might have fared without the fire. Baldwin inherited a dead complex in ruin, and never did anything close to substantial business.

Henry Grimm's lonely store provides the purest glimpse of an independent owner. Other than one very early mention of a possible business partner, there are no indications that Grimm was supported by others during the lifetime of the pier complex. He did not sell out until it became untenable for him to continue, and when he did sell it was not to another lumbering firm. Historic records contains clues that Grimm found himself dancing near bankruptcy at least once. There are few mentions of the pier store or other buildings at the pier location. It is not a coincidence that Grimm's Pier was the smallest and most humble of the later pier complexes.

## *Self-Made Men*

The Self-Made Men arrived in Kewaunee County with enough financial and/or social capital socked away to tide them over through the occasional bout of bad luck. Most rose from humble beginnings, learning about the lumber trade and making crucial business connections along the way. Their partnerships provided the degree of stability needed to navigate the lake and lumber trades in the tumultuous years leading up to the lumber boom and the economic panics of the 1870s. Successful Self-Made Men lived at their complexes or installed competent and trustworthy foremen and managers in their place. Whether the Self-Made Men succeeded came down to two important factors: their ability to think long-term and luck.

Dean's Mills/Carlton is a successful story of Self-Made Men. E. B. Dean met J. V. Taylor in Omro, and both cut their teeth on the lumber industry there before Dean moved to Kewaunee County and brought in cousin John Borland as a partner. Dean knew the pitfalls of the lumber business, and Borland moved to Chicago to keep his finger on the pulse of the markets and handle transactions there. Though there were some early financial difficulties and some property was auctioned off to pay debts, their firm weathered the destruction of the entire complex in the 1864 fire and rebuilt better than before. Borland, still suffering from wounds received at Jenkin's Ferry, stepped out and Taylor stepped in. Taylor brought deep pocketbooks and took on Borland's role of distant partner.

The Bohemians who took over from Dean and Taylor, though not founding partners, fit the model as well. Ed and Fred Bach, Wenzel Kieweg, and the Dishmaker family worked their way up through the ranks. They earned enough money to buy in and earned enough respect through experience to be accepted as partners. They learned the ins and outs of the trade and constantly sought ways to improve the business and to diversify. At first, they leaned on J. V. Taylor in Chicago, who provided benefits such as the schooner *Driver*. Later, it was their own widespread family ties and the reputations they established in the community that kept Carlton going. Risk was spread amongst the close-knit partners and among the diverse income streams that they established: lumbering, the mercantile trade, dairy, and farming. The family were also very lucky. Though there were incidents and accidents, none were severe enough to cause them real problems.

Captain Fellows was another Self-Made Man, and it is impossible not to compare him to Ed Bach. Like Bach, he purchased an existing mill and pier complex after learning how the milling and lumber trades operated. Like Bach, he cultivated a wide social circle. Fellow's brother Harrison Fellows played the dual role of Fred Bach/J. V. Taylor; though he was never an official partner, he was involved in the southern shipping markets and presumably gave Foscoro a discount on shipping on the schooner *Forest*. Unlike Ed Bach, Capt. Fellows took most of the financial risks and obligations entirely upon himself. The financial panic of 1872 struck his balance sheets just after he acquired Foscoro, and he nearly didn't recover. His former business concerns provided him enough of a cushion to see him through the ordeal until the profits available in the lumber boom allowed him to recoup some of his losses. It is telling that Fellows' impulse, after owning the complex for only a short time, was to try to sell it. If he had, his life might have been far better. Instead, he partnered with Swaty & Son and expanded his business holdings to the Clay Banks pier complex.

Rather than diversifying, Captain Fellows overextended himself. He had enough cash (or credit) to build a substantial home for his family at Foscoro and finance the mill and his own pier store. The incredibly bad luck that Foscoro suffered, combined with the effects of deforestation and short-sighted decision making, drained his revived fortune away. The actions of Fellows and his sons speak to strain and underfunding, particularly after Swaty & Fellows dissolved. Carlton's sons stepped up to take on the mantle of their fathers' business interests, while Captain Fellows' sons fled for better opportunities. Lawsuits rippled up through the financial stream and each new round of claimants added the prior round of claimants to the growing list of defendants. A hierarchy of debts came due. Foscoro's workforce left, and Foscoro had no commercial backup to fall to.

### *Merchant Princes*

Merchant Princes established pier communities as outgrowths of existing businesses. They were already members of one or more larger commercial partnerships when the piers were founded, were based in the local harbor towns or southern cities even if they did not live there, had ample capital to spare, and were established players in the local mercantile or lumber trade. Their partnerships owned extensive timberlands, which they sold to immigrants as timber was logged off. Most were absentee owners; Fay and Kwapil were the only Merchant Princes to live at their rural ports. The Merchant Princes discarded the pier complexes when the lumber boom was over, selling out to former employees and other interested parties. The success or failure of the Merchant Princes rested entirely on their ability to keep their account balances in the black, or at least to deftly juggle the numbers in the red column enough to keep partners and mortgage holders from noticing.

By the time J. V. Taylor openly partnered with E. B. Dean, he had reached this level. He worked in the milling and lumber trades for fifteen years and was possibly a silent partner with Dean and Borland. Taylor's subsequent time on the lumber fleets, the ships he brought to the table, and his presence at Chicago lumber markets benefited Dean's Pier/Carlton immensely. He made a good partnership with Dean and later with Edward Bach and was able to rely on them to manage Dean's Pier/Carlton in his absence. Fortunately for Dean's Pier/Carlton, the Bachs placed the community on a secure and diversified footing prior to Taylor's departure and his withdrawal did little damage.

Sprague & Owen accrued extensive property and had some lumbering experience prior to founding Sprague's Pier but overextended themselves too many times. Mill worker Rollef O. Oien had to go all the way to Milwaukee to cash in the IOU that Sprague gave him in lieu of wages (*Skandinaven* 1899). Wells & Valentine similarly put themselves underwater at Silver Creek, so both ports died early deaths. Foster, Coe, & Rowe might have done the same, since their backgrounds were not as well anchored in the lumber and mercantile business as other partnerships. Fortunately, the trio of brothers-in-law sold out to Fellows just before the panic of 1872 and before Stoney Creek's water flow diminished.

Hitchcock & Co. combined three of the leading merchants and lumber dealers in Kewaunee into a local juggernaut. Partners W. Hitchcock, V. Mashek, and W. Johnson established Alaska Pier simply to rake in profit from the more outlying areas of Kewaunee County. Mashek's brother-in-law Frank Kwapil struggled to find his footing in the world of commercial royalty, but he



blossomed when he was put in charge of Alaska Pier and catapulted up the mercantile ladder. Partners in the firm came and went, as Hitchcock, Mashek, and Johnson pulled away and Frank Shimmel and Joseph Janda came in, but Alaska Pier stayed within a firm cocoon of mercantile support. When the lumber boom ended, that support ended and all went on to other things.

Fay & Co., a partnership between experienced and wealthy lumbermen Edward Decker and C. B. Fay, set up Langworthy to service the inland mill site at Casco. The pier complex was never meant to be anything more than an export point for lumber. When the lumber ran out and other means of transport came in, Langworthy was leased to Kwapil and then sold to David Baldwin.

Pfister & Vogel were in the midst of a meteoric rise when they purchased Sandy Bay. To them, the little complex was just another business asset, playing third fiddle to their tanneries at Milwaukee and Two Creeks. They downsized when the bark and timber markets started to slide and sold Sandy Bay to their foreman.

### ***The Hidden***

Historic accounts of the late 1800s, like media accounts today, focused on people who were ‘newsworthy’. For the most part, that meant those who were male, white, and successful according to the perceptions of the time. Other community residents appear in contemporary accounts only when notable feats, life events, illness or accident, or social calls occurred. There are no lists of residents of each community, and even census data does not record who worked at a pier complex vs. who merely lived nearby.

Haulers, teamsters, and loaders were employed to move timber from lands owned by the companies and partnerships that operated the pier through the complex and onto ships. Millwrights, mechanics, carpenters, blacksmiths, sawyers, cheesemakers, sailors, stonemasons, wagon-makers, bookkeepers, and other specialists found work in the pier complexes, as did unskilled laborers. Company farms associated with the pier complexes, such as the Taylor & Bach farm at Carlton, employed farmhands. Even the boarding houses required staff, as the presence of a probable servant girl in the boarding house at Dean’s Pier testifies. This workforce brought between 50 and 250 people to most coastal complexes—with Grimm’s Pier serving as a probable exception. We know little about their lives.

As previously noted, many lived in worker’s housing at the complexes, in the big houses, or in boarding houses. Those that didn’t set up homesteads or farmsteads of their own nearby, as Mathias Rudebeck and Charles Arpin did at Dean’s Pier/Carlton. The 1860 census for Dean’s Pier/Carlton and other records indicate that carpenters, sailors, teamsters, and laborers lived in their own homes in the immediate vicinity of the pier complex. First-hand accounts also state that temporary labor was summoned by ringing the pier bell, which brought people within earshot over for task-based employment.

The work of haulers and teamsters was dangerous and strenuous, and the amount of wood moved per trip borders on the unbelievable. Haulers sometimes were paid by the amount delivered, and the incentive to move hazardous loads was ever-present. A moment’s carelessness or a run-in with Kewaunee County’s fractious horse teams could spell death. Haulers and teamsters who set

records were lauded rather than scolded, and a successful (or spectacularly unsuccessful) delivery was one way to make the newspapers. Matthias Rudebeck transported 5.5 tons of hemlock over twelve miles of harsh road to Dean's Pier/Carlton in a single load in 1879 (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1879b). John Kinney singlehandedly took 22,000 shingles to Langworthy in 1874 (*Ahnapee Record* 1874f).

Loaders piered goods stockpiled in the pieryards and moved them into and onto arriving vessels. Men caught limbs between docked ships and the piers, fell to their deaths, drowned, and were at risk from shifting loads and runaway horses (e.g., *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1864h). Wages were low. In 1881–1882, loaders at Ahnapee and Kewaunee received the modern equivalent of approximately \$7.25 per hour for loading bark and \$8.75 per hour for loading railroad ties, assuming eight hour days (*Ahnapee Record* 1882g; *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1881j). Given that days might stretch out much longer, the true amount per hour was almost certainly lower. Loaders at Langworthy pier, north of Ahnapee, attempted to strike for higher wages in the midst of loading the schooner *Grant*. New loaders were hired instead, and when the strikers tried to block the new crew from working, the strikers were "...compelled to desist by a judicious handling of fire-arms by the [ship's] Captain" (*Ahnapee Record* 1874i).

Work in the mills brought the possibility of amputations and death, as well as long hours in conditions that ranged from frigid to stiflingly hot. In late winter of 1875, the temperature dropped so low that Casco's knot sawyers went on unofficial strike and the mill shut down for the rest of the day (*Kewaunee Enterprise* 1875g). Twelve-hour days were not uncommon. The two-dozen mill hands at Dean's Pier/Carlton were paid the modern equivalent of a \$5.50 per hour and the ten men working at the McNally mill were paid about \$4.00 per hour in 1860. Fellows paid his dozen mill workers the modern equivalent of between \$3.70 and \$4.94 per hour in 1880. It is presumed that the low wages were balanced, in part, by free housing and other amenities.

At the other end of the pay scale, the stores employed a rotating selection of clerks and bookkeepers, and these positions came with the possibility of upward mobility. Good clerks might be promoted into managerial positions, and trusted managers and foremen—if they were thrifty—might be able to purchase partnerships when senior partners retired. Clerk and later manager Ed Bach bought the Dean's Pier/Carlton partnership from John Borland, and clerk and later manager Wenzel Kieweg bought in with Bach as an additional partner once he had raised the requisite funds. Manager John Waegli bought the Sandy Bay complex from the Pfister & Vogel Leather Company when his former employers sold out. Frank Kwapil took on an ownership role at Alaska Pier.

This is not to say that life at the managerial or administrative levels was easy. The foremen and managers kept their noses to the grindstone. Kieweg was responsible for examining and buying goods brought into the store, which meant lifting and carrying heavy loads and putting them on wagons or in storage. In 1877, Waegli and family handled that season's piercing on their own while managing their farm. The Fellows sons worked in the family business and suffered significant injuries doing so—George was hit by exploding machinery and Fred lost several toes. Frank Fellows died. Owner C. B. Fay was badly hurt when his horses trampled him as he tried to move a load of grain at Langworthy.

For the women and children of the lost ports, life was equally hard. Most women married early to men older than they were and usually spent their later years as widows in consequence. They bore many children and buried some at young ages. Kate Shaw wept over the bodies of eight of her eleven children, taken *en masse* on two occasions by disease. Emogene Bach's firstborn son was carried away by diphtheria. Mary Fellows birthed a stillborn. Mrs. Orell watched her children burn to death in their home.

The women appear in obituaries and in brief notes that Mrs. So-and-So visited a relative or traveled to see a friend. Mrs. C. B. Post, the wife of the blacksmith at Foscoro, left the largest footprint behind. She claimed to be descended from the royal families of England and the Netherlands (*Algoma Record* 1909b). She owned land in her own right, selling timberlands in Kewaunee County in May of 1899 (*Algoma Record* 1899b). She was a contributor to the "For the Cook" column in *The Weekly Wisconsin* in the 1880s, providing recipes for fried cakes and methods for cooking rice and cultivating yeast (*The Weekly Wisconsin* 1885a, 1885b).

Mary Fellows helped to manage the hotel her husband purchased in Ahnapee. Anna Rudebeck wanted to be a nurse and purchased goods for the Carlton store—the only woman to be mentioned in an active commercial role at any of the lost ports. Anna Dishmaker Bach was credited with her family's success and described as a guiding force behind the scenes. And then there is Emogene St. Peters Bach Kieweg, wife of Fred Bach, widow of Fred Bach, wife of Wenzel Kieweg. Was she happy in her first marriage? Did she marry Kieweg for love or for security and familiarity?

### ***From Boom...***

The people of the rural coastal ports bought, milled, shipped, and sold timber. They wanted very much to make money doing so. The great pinery and hardwood booms of northeastern Wisconsin provided them the opportunity to do just that. Not all survived the boom years. Beyond good financial underpinnings, the choices that each owner made planning for expected difficulty and reacting to unexpected trouble helped to determine which ports survived the busy times and which ones buckled under.

Some successful pier owners bought large tracts of timberland (Figure 135). Timberlands provided them with a secure supply of wood for the cost of the land and the wages paid to the lumbermen. They were jealous of their holdings, as Taylor & Bach's warning to timber poachers illustrates. McNally and Pfister & Co. each had extensive holdings in the hemlock groves west and northwest of Sandy Bay. Taylor and Bach purchased a great deal of land in northern Carlton Township. Decker owned thousands of acres. C. B. Fay was an early speculator as well, buying up swathes of timber in partnership with others. Fellows bought so much timberland on the Door County side of the line that he may have choked off Foscoro's supply and forced its sale to him (Boyd et al. 2020:11). Lumber shipping continued only so long as timber was available and was profitable only when the market allowed it to be. Having a bespoke supply gave each port complex a degree of control over the amount of material—and what type of material—banked up in the pier yards and a way to estimate how much timber remained.

Foremen working at the rural pier complexes also bought wood products from farmers and lumberjacks working the surrounding countryside. This wood might arrive in any condition and be

of any type—shingle, post, tie, bark, cordwood, etc. and the foremen needed to know how to grade, mark, and price everything. Set the prices too low or turn away too much, and sellers might go elsewhere. Set prices too high or bring in inferior product, and risk losing money. The Bach family and Fellows' clerks kept their ears open for traffic on the telegraph line, seeking insight into market prices and other factors that might impact their business. Fellows altered his operations on the fly, switching back and forth between the production of cut lumber and shingles as economic conditions changed.

The distances wood was carried grew as settlement spread inland. Company timberlands were cleared of pine, then hardwood, then sold. Farmers and a few final complex-owned woodlots kept the trade going at low levels as the boom came to an end. Fellows' constant mill and pier troubles ironically extended the period he was able to ship lumber out, since they delayed clearance of the Foscoro timberlands after surrounding areas were logged out. Dean's Pier/Carlton received wood from a radius of twelve miles or more, which brought their reach into conflict with dealers in Two Creeks and Mishicot. Langworthy, a special-purpose pier, was fed by the inland mills of Casco several miles away.

Successful complexes needed good infrastructure—piers, mills, dams, roads, bridges, ships, stores, and other buildings—to function under the stress of the boom. Investment in high-quality infrastructure was a gamble. Ice, storm, and fire took little notice of the amount of money poured into a pier or a building and consumed expensive improvements as easily as slapdash ones. On the other hand, inadequate infrastructure was a self-inflicted wound. Finding the balance was a matter of good planning and luck.

Dean's Pier/Carlton and Foscoro demonstrate the thin line between success and failure very well. Dean and Borland invested in a steam mill, which let them run regardless of the level of water in the nearby creek. Foscoro invested in waterpower, both in the form of upgrades to the mill and an expensive program of dredging in Stoney Creek. When the creeks ran low after the region was deforested and intermittent drought set in, Foscoro's mill shut down. When Stoney Creek burst its banks in spring torrents aggravated by increased runoff—another effect of deforestation—Foscoro's mill shut down. Investment in steam power would have been prudent, but Captain Fellows pushed off the conversion and never followed through even after purchasing the needed machinery.

Dean and the Bachs kept their pier in good repair, working on it seasonally even when no damage had occurred—and to be fair it rarely did. The Fellows family used a cost-cutting measure to avoid the hire of a steam pile driver at Foscoro, and part of the pier fell over on its own afterwards. Frequent ice shoves destroyed the Foscoro pier repeatedly in any case, so the shortcut might actually have saved the Fellows' money in the long run. The Fellows family also continued shipping from the pier when it was a shadow of its former self.

Dean's Pier/Carlton drew on the lake fleet owned by J. V. Taylor, particularly the schooner *Driver*. This helped them keep transport costs down. Captain Fellows, likewise, purchased the *Sea Star* and made use of his brother's ships to boot. The *Driver* rarely entered the newspapers on account of accidents. The *Sea Star* was in terrible repair when Fellows bought her, suffered many costly accidents, and sank with Captain Fellows on board. Fellow's attempt to replace her with a steam

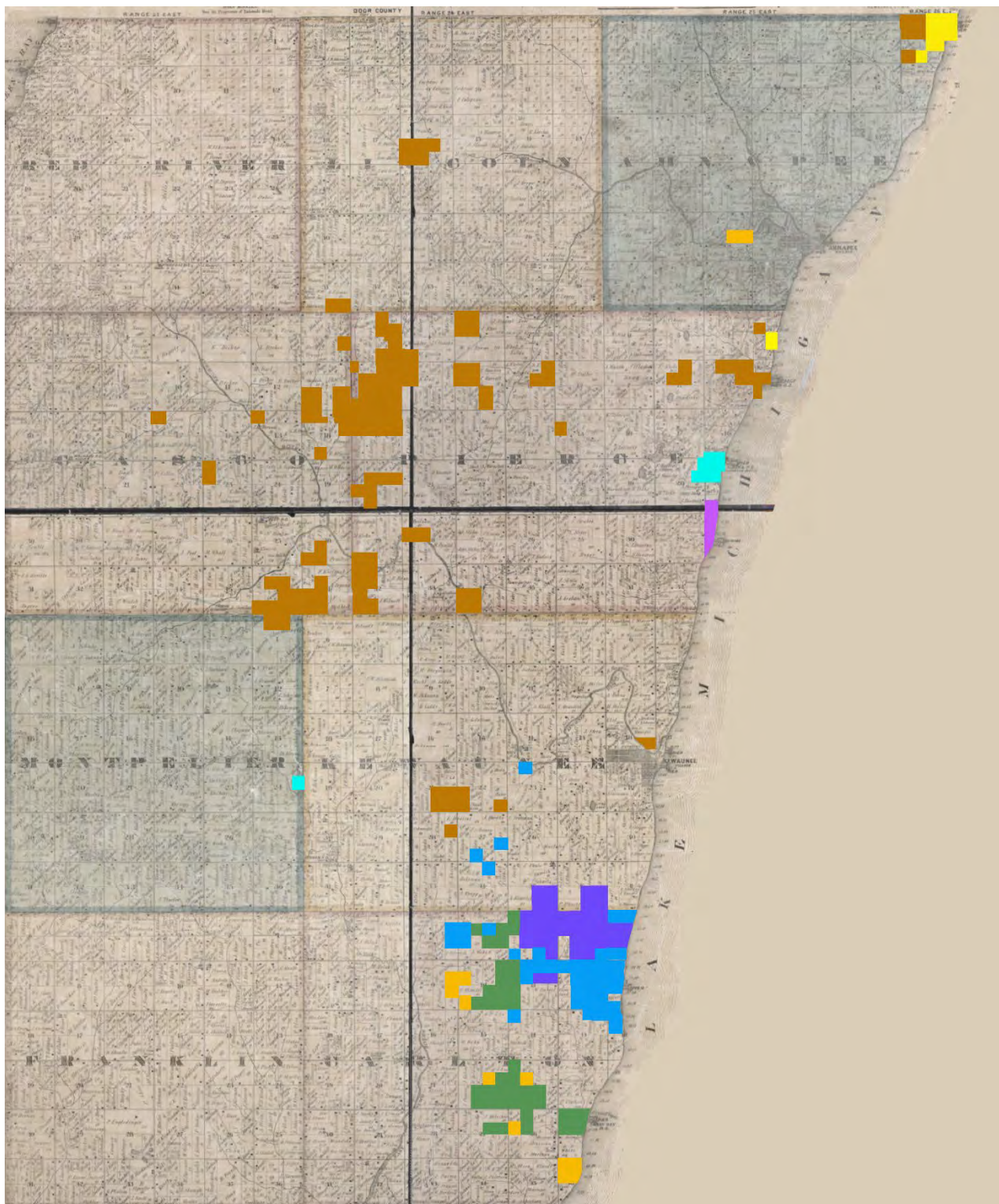


Figure 135: Timberland owned by individuals and companies associated with Kewaunee County's rural ports. Light brown: Sprague's Pier; green: Sandy Bay; light blue: Dean's Pier; dark blue: J. V. Taylor, in role as possible silent partner to Dean's Pier; brown: Langworthy; purple: Grimm's Pier; turquoise: Alaska Pier; yellow: Foscoro (note, Foscoro's owners had additional land in Door County).

barge made from the hull of the sunken tug *Tillinghast* was poorly timed and ended in spectacular disaster when she was destroyed by a storm the day after her long-awaited launch.

### ***...To Bust***

The end was foreshadowed during the waning years of the boom by diminishing shipments and longer hauling times. A brief burst of consolidation when owners with more initiative or access to ready cash bought, leased, or worked multiple piers served as a final gasp. Fellow's joint co-ownership and management of Foscoro and the Clay Banks pier is an early standout and could have doubled his income if both piers weren't so disaster prone. Instead, Fellows doubled his risk. Kwapil leased Langworthy pier for a brief time, using it as a shipping point to broaden the effective range of his Alaska operations. Waegli split his time between Sandy Bay and Two Creeks in Manitowoc County, mostly to earn extra income from Pfister & Vogel after they pulled out of Sandy Bay.

The death of each rural port was a death by attrition. The complexes existed as communities only so long as they had residents, and the residents stayed because they had a reason to, because they wanted to, or because they had nowhere else to go. Grimm's Pier never had a large population to begin with. Henry Grimm made the wise choice to make a new life for his family in the hospitality business in Kewaunee. Even his easy pickings had come with heartache, and the post-boom era would have only brought more. Grimm's Pier vanished along with him. Langworthy's purpose was to be an export point serving the real manufacturing center at Casco. When the goods stopped moving down the Casco Road, Langworthy shut down. The workers and their families returned to Casco or went elsewhere looking for employment. No one stepped forward to buy the Alaska People's Store at Alaska Pier when shipping shut down there, but Pohland's store at Alaska Corners still sold goods about a mile inland near a hotel and saloon. Alaska Pier's population dispersed or moved inland to the newer commercial center and Alaska turned away from the lake.

Foscoro's economic heart was its mill. Without it, there was no need for a large workforce, and no income to use to resupply the pier store. There was no work milling lumber, no work cutting timber, no work hauling goods, no work clerking at the store, no work tending bar or cooking for guests after the mill and saloon shut down. Customers found nothing on hand to buy except small amounts of lumber, hay, and wool. The wheels of commerce at Foscoro came to a grudging halt.

Fellows and his sons tried to make a go of sheep breeding, and by all accounts they did relatively well at that. Willie Fellows came tantalizingly close to hitting on the fruit-based economy that made Door County cherries famous before giving up. A seasonal need for berry pickers might have sustained Foscoro for many years more. It is doubtful that Fellows had enough liquid cash left to buy produce from local residents, and one could only employ so many shepherds. He had barely enough pier left to ship goods from in any case and had no ships to ship them with. The arrival of the railroad to Ahnapee and Sturgeon Bay dealt the last blow to any thought of shipping from Foscoro. The last known tenants in Foscoro's worker's housing—an elderly man and his young granddaughter—shared their living space with curing lumber and telephone equipment (*Algoma Record* 1909a).



Sandy Bay was, at its heart, the McNally mill and the Pfister & Vogel complex. McNally grew too old to run the mill and gave it up in favor of his house and farm. The Lakeside House kept the McNallys solvent until the end, but the workers they had once employed went on to other things. Pfister & Vogel's workers likewise went to Two Creeks or other realms of employment when the company sold to Waegli. Waegli couldn't fight deforestation and broader economic trends, and after trying to do everything by himself gave up and tore the complex down. Waegli set up a cheese factory where the original store building had been and took in the lease money it brought.

Dean's Pier, in its last iteration as Carlton, was well-prepared for the end of the boom and fully intended to ride it out. Ed and Fred Bach embraced economic diversity with gusto. The managers and owners operated a show farm where they demonstrated the latest agricultural tools and seed stock to customers and grew farm products for export. They opened one of the first cheese factories north of Sheboygan. They partnered with the Dishmaker family to run a well-patronized wagon shop. They built a granary and diversified into agricultural produce, buying grain, hay, and other products of the farm. They fished from the pier. They improved, expanded, advertised, and promoted their store, and then expanded to two stores. They cultivated careful reputations as honest dealers and trustworthy merchants.

These additional income streams allowed Carlton to survive the end of the boom, but larger economic factors worked against the community at large. When the mill was dismantled and sold off, the mill workers lost their jobs. The haulers and teamsters had nothing to haul, and no wages to draw. The switch from grain to dairy reduced the number of farm laborers needed to work the fields. Fred Bach and Wenzel Kieweg's interest in the farm waned in any case in favor of their mercantile projects. The partners sold off the farm bit by bit. Carlton diminished.

Carlton, after the boom, was not the same Carlton. The transition to cheese-making and mercantile commerce benefitted the families that owned Carlton and kept money flowing into their accounts, but those businesses could never support the same number of workers as before. Carlton evolved from a manufacturing and shipping center into a commercial and service hub. Residents of the surrounding farms and hamlets still came to shop at the store. They still brought milk and cream to the cheese factory. They still came to pick up their mail and catch up on the latest gossip. As a result, Carlton kept on going after the other rural ports of Kewaunee County fell into ruin and even as its own pier started to fall to pieces.

Carlton's death was due not to failure, but to success. The families that owned and operated Carlton's businesses accrued enough wealth to purchase land for new stores along the railroad lines in Kewaunee and Luxemburg. They moved to those locations and took the next step up the economic ladder. Carlton was demoted to a branch store, and then sold into less-skilled hands. Since most of the population of Carlton was composed of the Bach, Kieweg, and Dishmaker families, when they pulled out Carlton was done for.

### ***Wisconsin's Lost Coastal Communities***

Hundreds of rural ports once fringed the Great Lakes (nearly seventy are known from Door County in Wisconsin alone). Piers stretched out into the waters wherever goods needed to be moved to and from shore. Not all ports were the same. Rural port communities evolved along different lines

depending on their location, the products shipped over their piers, and their proximity to the lake cities. Lumber ruled the day at many, but piers also were built to ship stone, brick, fish, and other products. In their waning days, longer-lived pier communities cast about for replacement commodities to sustain them—hay grown on the cutover lands, grain, sheep, cheese, and fish—but those income streams were neither large enough nor steady enough to sufficiently fund pier upkeep, keep store shelves stocked, and employ workers (Boyd et al. 2020). The close of the lumber boom killed some. Overharvesting killed others. The railroad spelled the end of many. The opening of the Sturgeon Bay ship canal was particularly devastating to pier communities in Door County.

In every region, the presence of the harbor towns and cities influenced patterns of settlement and development. Secure and protected harbor facilities allowed bulk importation of coal to fuel railroad engines and other machines as the region industrialized in the 1860s. Overland transportation routes—particularly railroad lines—converged on the harbors, linking them to each other and to inland manufacturing, commercial, and political centers and bypassing the rural ports. At the same time, the developing terrestrial network provided new opportunities for inland community development at crossroads, mill sites, stage stops, and railroad stops. Infrastructure, economic networks, and political systems developed to service the harbors rather than rural populations, driving patterns of development that often harmed the rural piers.

The northern, central, and southern sections of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline diverged along different paths. North of Kewaunee County, colonists and speculators traversing the Door Peninsula encountered rocky shores and shallow, poor soil. The rugged coast and its fearsome shoals posed challenges to pier construction and sent many ships to their doom. There were no large rivers where harbors could be established, but the convoluted coast was rich in protected—if shallow—bays. Paradoxically, some of the earliest piers to be built were set up in the remotest areas of the county: the rich fishing grounds around Death's Door and other areas of the coast. Dolostone outcrops along the coast drew stone dealers, and before long quarrymen and stone masons gnawed at the shoreline. Lumbermen were not far behind. The Door Peninsula was thickly blanketed with valuable timber. The tide of deforestation swept northward a step ahead of European colonization, so that Door County's lumber pier communities were some of the last to be founded and some of the last to survive.

Absentee landowners bought up vast tracts of land, with the intention of extracting timber and then selling the cut over lands to any optimistic (or naïve) settlers up to the task. Initial exports were comprised of minimally finished items such as tanning bark, railroad ties, whole logs, fence posts, and telegraph poles, since there were few nearby markets or manufacturing facilities. Establishment of a passable overland road system took decades. In the absence of wide-scale agricultural development and roads, the piers and their workforces served as nuclei around which settlement condensed (Boyd et al. 2020). Warehouses, boarding houses, and residences were erected next to the mills and stores, and before long entrepreneurs came to build and run dance halls and taverns, hotels, and gristmills. Populations grew, and schools, post offices, telegraph offices, and other pieces of social and communication infrastructure were added (Boyd et al. 2020). Some of these little rural ports—such as Whitefish Bay—survive today, though their exporting days are over. Small docks stand in place of their piers and sport fishermen and jet skis frolic where schooners came to call.

South of Kewaunee County, the stretch of Lake Michigan coastline extending along the shores of Sheboygan, Ozaukee, and Milwaukee counties was kinder, though less attractive to the lumberman's eye. The coastal forests were smaller and composed mainly of deciduous hardwood species rather than pine, cedar, or hemlock. Lake bottoms were sandier. Winters were less harsh and soils were good.

The people of the southern rural port communities had no lack of consumers wishing to purchase land, buy goods, and ship grain. Chicago, Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Evanston, and the other emerging urban centers on the far southern end of the lake were closer, as were the disembarkation points for the torrent of immigrants that flooded in between 1840 and 1870. The first settlers and their transportation infrastructure were drawn inland almost immediately by the abundance of open savannah and mining opportunities to the west. As a result, many early mills in southern Wisconsin were built along interior rivers rather than on the Lake Michigan coast. Road systems expanded rapidly and kept pace with immigration and exploitation of the region's natural resources. Railroad lines, which took thirty-odd years to reach Door County, were established within Statehood's first decade in the south.

The southern rural pier communities accordingly grew along different lines. Settlements were as likely to condense around inland crossroads, rapids, fords, and river confluences as near the piers themselves, and sometimes predated the piers entirely. The region's abundant rivers allowed water traffic to venture inland and logs to be boomed directly to the harbors. Coastal forests were smaller and composed of harder woods in less abundance. The residents of the southern rural ports, unable to compete with the inland mills and harbor towns and cities, focused their attention on the production of cordwood and non-timber-based products. They served as the 19<sup>th</sup> century equivalent of gas stations and rest stops. Rather than gasoline, they supplied the lake fleet's steamships with cordwood to feed their boilers and provided places where the ship's crews and passengers could come ashore. The southern rural piers also served as import-export points supplying the rural hinterland and inland settlements faster than overland traffic could. Settlement filled the landscape at an early date, so there was agricultural cargo to be shipped out and a pressing need for mercantile products to be brought in, to be sold in stores that might or might not be located along the coastline.

Though described as lumber piers, and certainly engaged in the wood trade and funded by income available during the lumber boom, the lake piers between Milwaukee and Two Rivers served a more diversified and deeper hinterland from the beginning. Early in the area's development, poor roads spurred entrepreneurs such as Barnum Blake and the Ronk brothers to establish piers in areas too far from the publicly-funded harbors to be efficiently served by them. A variety of goods were brought in by ship to supply newly established farms and agricultural communities in exchange for a variety of locally-produced products. So long as timber was plentiful, timber was the main export. Historic records however, confirm that many other products moved through southern pier communities.

Most ports—Norheim, Centerville, McCrea's pier, the Peterson/Wilson pier, Amsterdam, Ronksville, Blakesville, and Port Ulao specifically—are known to have exported cord wood and roughly shaped timber products (Anonymous 1965; Cowan 1985; Dippel 2018; Ertel 1976; Falge 1912:327; *Hammond Times* 1939; Pape 1993; Zaun 1965; Ziller 1912:246). In addition,

Centerville exported grain and beer (Ertel 1976; Falge 1912) and Barnum Blake traded in grain and sold it via his piers at Amsterdam and Blakesville (Anonymous 1965). Brickyards are mentioned in connection with McCrea's pier (Pape 1993) and Kemper's pier (*Manitowoc Herald* 1855; *Watertown News* 1876). Fish was exported in bulk from the Peterson/Wilson pier (Cowan 1985; Dippel 2018) and Amsterdam (Buchen 1945; Ziller 1912:246).

Railroads were the death knell for the southern ports. Once the railroad lines reached into the interior and linked the region's larger settlements together, railroad towns replaced the coastal ports as commercial distribution centers. It was faster and cheaper to ship via rail. The rise of coal-fired boilers and bunkers and overharvesting in the coastal forests put an end to the cordwood trade. The southern piers ceased operation, and those communities that retained small populations turned inland and away from the lake.

Kewaunee County and adjacent Manitowoc County sat in between the northern and southern pier regions. Like Door County, they were within the great pineries. Their soils, however, were deeper and richer and very much worth farming. Rivers provided access to interior timberlands, water transport, and water power, while smaller streams joined the coast in between and provided just enough water to create coastal mill ponds. The coasts curved in great sweeps rather than the jagged serrations of the Door Peninsula or the long straightaways south of Sheboygan, providing some protection from wind and wave. Shoals were present, but less numerous than to the north. This central coastline was relatively far away from the southern urban centers, but not so far as to be remote, and had the added bonus of proximity to Lake Winnebago, Green Bay, and the heavy river and railroad traffic of the Fox-Wisconsin River passage. Within this middle ground, coastal settlements developed much as Door County's would, but with the added benefit of a substantial agricultural hinterland and easier linkage to interior transportation networks. The landscape transformed from forest to farm. Afterwards, the pier complexes faded away.

## ***Conclusion***

Wisconsin's coastal counties were forever changed by the rural port complexes. Kewaunee County may well have made the transition to farmland far more slowly and might not have embraced dairy and cheese production to the extent it did without the supply lines, income, and ideas flowing forth from Carlton and other port settlements. Their impact, however, reached far beyond Wisconsin's borders.

The wood products shipped from Kewaunee County's rural ports built America's Midwest. From Chicago, Wisconsin's forests streamed outward and onto the prairies. News of the opening of the Transcontinental railroad and of Custer's defeat sparked down telegraph lines strung on Wisconsin's trees. Wisconsin's cedars fenced the paths of the great bison herds. Wisconsin's hemlocks tanned the leather that protected cowboy's legs from rattlesnake and cactus thorns and cushioned the collars of the Clydesdale teams that pulled brewer's wagons in St. Louis. Wisconsin's trees, laid side by side as railroad ties, bore the weight of trains laden with Colorado silver. Shingles hewn by Wisconsin farmers and the lumber from Wisconsin mills gave shelter to hundreds of thousands of families.

From this perspective, the lost ports were never really lost at all. They vanished from living memory. The buildings that made up their hearts were dismantled, burned, or returned to the earth. Their founders and residents rest beneath gravestones both ostentatious and humble in shady lanes, windswept hillsides, and feral thickets. But the economies the rural ports helped establish remained. The farms they made possible remained. The far-away cities and towns they helped to build remained. The landscape and Nation they transformed stayed transformed and owe their current state in part to the rural ports of yesteryear. The shades of Lake Michigan's ghost ports linger still.



*Figure 136: Photograph by Harry Dankoler, ca. 1905, showing damage from storm and ice to a Lake Michigan pier in Door County, Wisconsin. WHS Image ID 69430.*

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1883b *Door County Advocate* 8 February.  
1883c *Door County Advocate* 10 May.  
1883d *Door County Advocate* 31 May.  
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1881u *Kewaunee Enterprise* 29 July.  
1881v *Kewaunee Enterprise* 5 August.  
1881w *Kewaunee Enterprise* 19 August.  
1881x *Kewaunee Enterprise* 26 August.  
1881y *Kewaunee Enterprise* 8 September.  
1881z *Kewaunee Enterprise* 16 September.  
1881aa *Kewaunee Enterprise* 23 September.  
1881bb *Kewaunee Enterprise* 30 September.  
1882a *Kewaunee Enterprise* 10 February.  
1882b *Kewaunee Enterprise* 24 February.  
1882c *Kewaunee Enterprise* 14 April.  
1882d *Kewaunee Enterprise* 5 May.  
1882e *Kewaunee Enterprise* 9 June.  
1882f *Kewaunee Enterprise* 23 June.  
1882g *Kewaunee Enterprise* 3 November.  
1883a *Kewaunee Enterprise* 2 February.  
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1893f *Kewaunee Enterprise* 7 July.  
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1894e *Kewaunee Enterprise* 13 July.  
1896 *Kewaunee Enterprise* 31 July.  
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1905 *Kewaunee Enterprise* 10 November.

1906a *Kewaunee Enterprise* 30 March.  
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 1915c *Kewaunee Enterprise* 1 October.  
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## **APPENDIX A**

# **2023 GPR Investigations at 47-KE-0114 Sandy Pier/McNally Mill, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin**



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## **ABSTRACT**

A ground penetrating radar survey of the McNulty Mill site at Sandy Bay was made at the invitation of the State Archaeologist Office. The area was immediately south of the Sandy Bay pier and was 20 x 24 meters. The result were mixed due to unsuitable surface conditions, however we can say that there are several anomaly concentrations. One of these appears to be in a rough square and likely represents a building.

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# INTRODUCTION

A ground penetrating radar survey was conducted May 4, 2023. The survey was located south of the Sandy Bay pier and was twenty by thirty meters. The surface conditions proved challenging but data was collected and limited results are presented.

## PHYSICAL SETTING

The survey was located in T22N R24E SE 1/4, NE ¼ in Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. The site area is located on a high, eroding ridge overlooking Lake Michigan and south of the River.

The area is in the Eastern Ridges and Lowlands geographic province of Wisconsin as defined by Martin (1932) and Albert (1995). The area topography is the result of glacial action in the late Pleistocene. The area is a part of the lake beach ridge system where beach ridges were formed over the last 12,000 years as the lake level changed dramatically at different times.

The soil within the boundary of the survey area is Superior Fine Sandy Loam, Rolling Phase (Sf). It is a very deep, moderately well drained soil. It was formed in a loamy water-laid deposit. Glacial till or clay lacustrine deposits formed by wave action. Slope is from 2 to 50%. In the survey area it is relatively flat (Soil Series).



Figure 1. Historical and archaeological sites in the Sandy Bay area. This report concerns a small portion of the McNally Mill. Courtesy Amy Rosebrough.

## **RESEARCH GOALS AND METHODS**

Goals of the research planned for 2023 included the following:

1) to conduct ground penetrating radar surveys of the area formerly occupied by the McNally Mill and determine if large features such as foundations are extant. The GPR results will be combined with other archaeological testing and mapping results conducted by the State Archaeologists Office.

## **FIELD AND LAB METHODS**

All work followed standard current archaeological field and laboratory procedures and techniques. One ground penetrating radar survey was accomplished to identify anomalies that could identify the area where buildings are located on maps. A temporary grid 20 x 24meters was established to conduct the survey and immediately removed after the survey was completed.

## **GROUND PENETRATING RADAR OVERVIEW**

Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) is a nondestructive geophysical method that uses radar pulses to image the subsurface. It uses electromagnetic radiation in the microwave band, and detects the reflected signals from subsurface anomalies. GPR can be used in rock, soil, ice, fresh water, pavements and structures. It is capable of detecting objects, changes in material, and voids (Conyers, 1997).

High-frequency radio waves are transmitted into the ground. When the wave encounters an object or a boundary with different dielectric constants, the receiving antenna records variations in the reflected return signal.

The electrical conductivity of the ground, the transmitted center frequency and the radiated power limits the depth range of a GPR. As conductivity increases, the penetration depth decreases as the signal dissipates. Higher frequencies do not penetrate as far as lower frequencies, but give better resolution. Good penetration is seen in dry sandy soils or massive dry materials such as granite, limestone, and concrete. In moist and/or clay/salt-laden soils and soils with high electrical conductivity, penetration is limited.

Geophysical survey techniques are a cost and time effective non-invasive method to gain information about the suspected mound and can serve as a base for future work in identifying suspected

## **DATA COLLECTION**

The GPR used in the survey was a Geophysical Survey Systems, Inc (GSSI) TerraSearch SIR (Subsurface Interface Radar) 3000. It is a single channel data acquisition unit manufactured by GSSI, Model 5103. A 400 MHz GSSI antenna was used and attached to the Digital Control Unit (DC-3000). This antenna is both the transmitter and receiver of the radar

signal and is ideal for most archaeological applications, penetrating 3 – 4 meters below the surface. The antennae is well shielded and generates a tight electromagnetic cone beneath the unit. Objects of 25 cm or more can be detected by a 400 MHz antenna. The antenna and DC-3000 are mounted on a GSSI Model 623 survey cart which incorporates a survey wheel for high-precision automatic distance measurements.

## **SURVEY METHODS**

The surveys was taken in a bidirectional manner, i.e. transects covered the area in aback and forth mowing the lawn motion. The survey grid was laid out using fiber tapes and plastic pin flags to minimize radar signal disturbance. Data were collected at .50 meter transect.

## **THE SITE AND RESULTING DATA DIFFICULTIES**

The site itself is located south of the creek and on a sand cliff about eighty feet above Lake Michigan. The field is covered with small brush and large thorn bushes making survey difficult. In addition, on the surface were tussock like formations that blocked the straight line transects. Sometimes transects had to be deviated around some immovable vegetation. During the survey the antennae face needs to be in contact with the surface in order to get the clearest data set for analysis. When the antennae lifts off the ground due to obstacles (decouples) an interruption in data is seen. In the resulting transect profiles vertical lines of interrupted data can be seen. This is as if you were hanging wallpaper and removed some of the edge of each piece for its full length. The resulting pattern on the wall would have gaps interrupting the picture. Because of this we can see multiple anomalies but it is difficult to see the extent of these anomalies. The plan view, while data is interrupted in the transect profiles, can still result in good data. However, the clarity of that data suffers. Clusters of anomalies can be seen but are not as clear and obvious as is normally the case.

## **DATA PROCESSING**

The data were processed using GSSI's RADAN version 7.0 software. The radargrams were processed to remove background noise, set time zero, and migration. The gain was set higher to improve anomaly amplification. All transects or vertical slices into the ground were analyzed as well as the layers of the 3-D plan view.

These processing steps improve the resulting accuracy in determining size, shape, depth of anomalies, subsurface features and reduce noise in the data. Individual transects were assembled into one radargram and examined using multiple color palettes. All vertical radargrams of transects were individually examined for anomalies. The assembled transect/radargram data was then put into 3-D mode and again examined in several color palettes for anomalies.





Figure 2 Aerial photograph of the survey area. The rectangle is the approximate location of the survey.

## SURVEY ONE

This survey was located on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan south of the creek. The grid meters with the 30 meter side paralleling the bluff. When looking for historic foundations it is often best to stay away from aligning the grid north- south to best see the building foundations. Often when surveying in cardinal directions over a building aligned to cardinal directions will show only walls that are crossed perpendicularly and not those parallel to the transects. The southernmost side of the grid was on a compass bearing of  $214^\circ$ . The southernmost corner was one meters west of a power plant metal datum. The associated survey lathe was marked, "9001 with an arrow pointing north along the bluff; 9004 with an arrow facing south along the bluff; 115' west of corner." This point was surveyed into an overall map of the site as well as the other three corners. The survey was started at the southern corner and transect went NW and SE in a bidirectional manner.

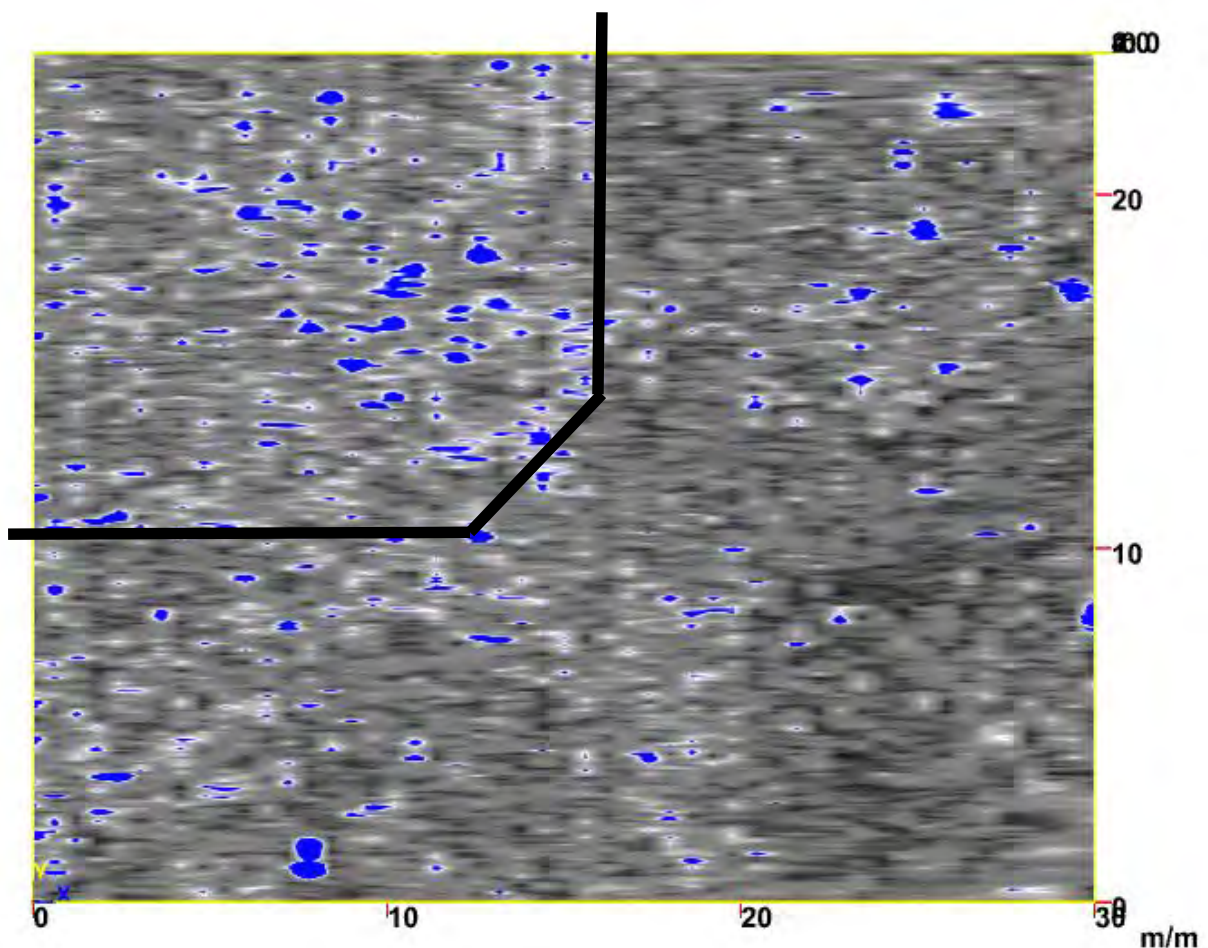


Figure 3. Plan view of the GPR grid. North is roughly to the upper right. The thick black line shows the outer edge of a curve in a two-track road. Many of the other "lines" are deer trails across the site.



During the survey marks were inserted into the file while collecting data whenever a deer trail was crossed. Interestingly, on the transects, at the surface was a small anomaly at each of these marks. Not only could they be seen in the transects but also in the plan view of the survey area (Figure 3).

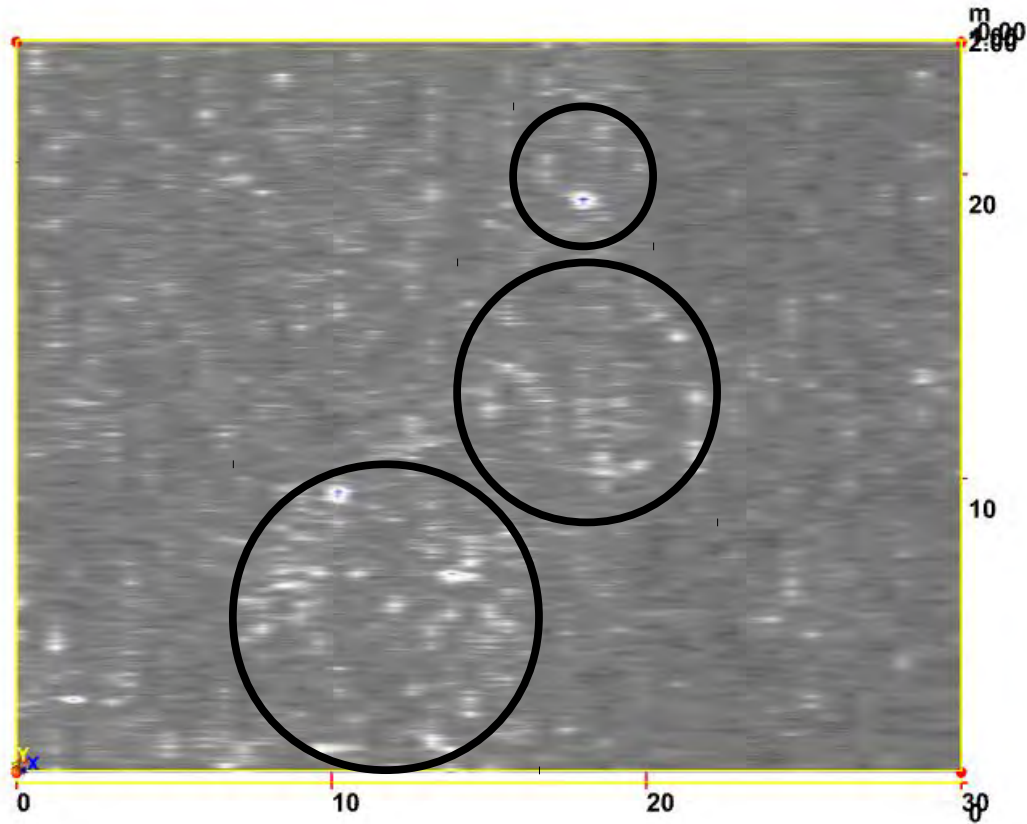


Figure 4. Clusters of small anomalies at .32 meter depth.

In figure 4, there are three major clusters of small anomalies. They do not, at this depth form much in the way of structures but show that something was occurring here in clusters. They may not indicate structures but they do indicate activity. This is relatively shallow at approximately .32 meters.

In figure 5, Anomaly clusters have been outlined. The circular one at the top of the figure has its origin near the surface and may relate to something more recent than the McNally Mill. The cluster of anomalies at the bottom of the figure and near the cliff edge can be easily seen to have a rectangular shape. This may be a building related to the mill. It is the most definitive cluster of the survey results.

In figure 6, data loss can be clearly seen. The loss of data via decoupling, can be seen as vertical breaks in the image as the antennae was being repeatedly separated from the ground due to the rough surface conditions.



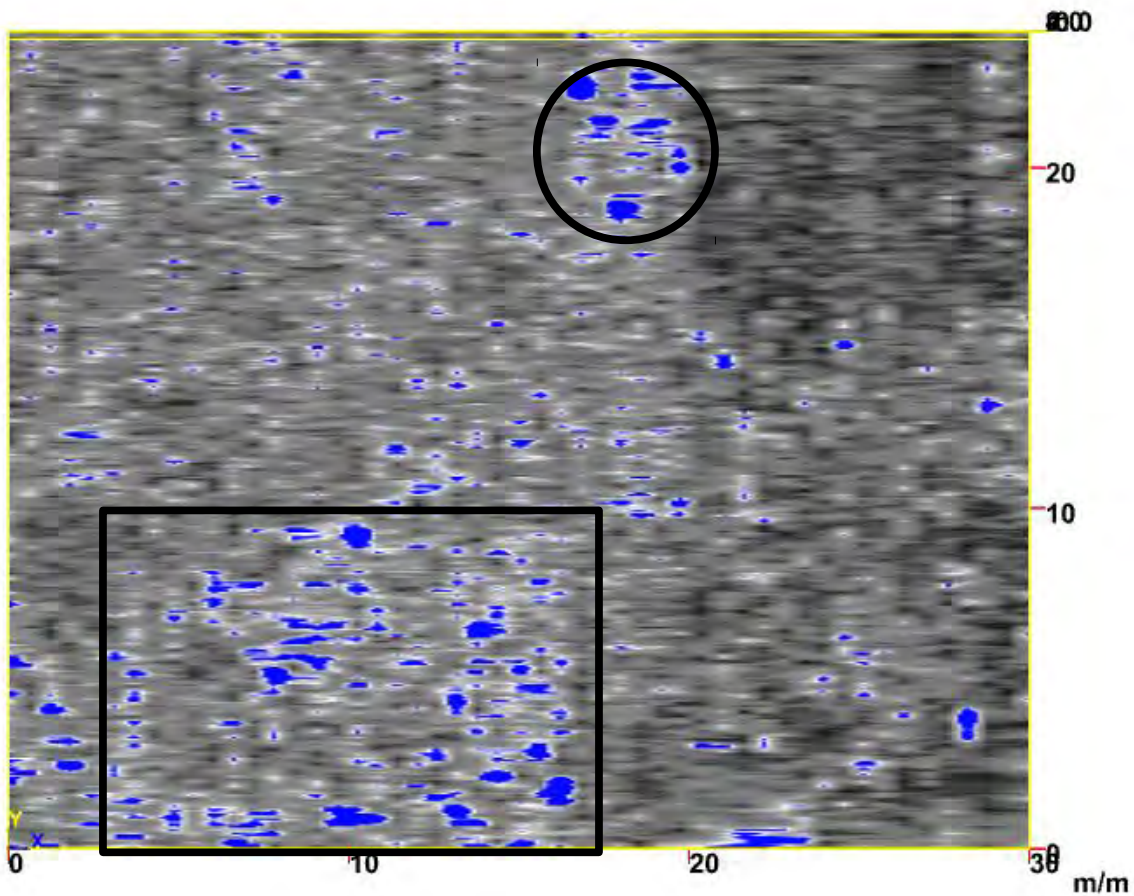


Figure 5. Plan view at 73 meters depth. Obvious anomaly clusters have lines around them. Many small anomalies are located between clusters.

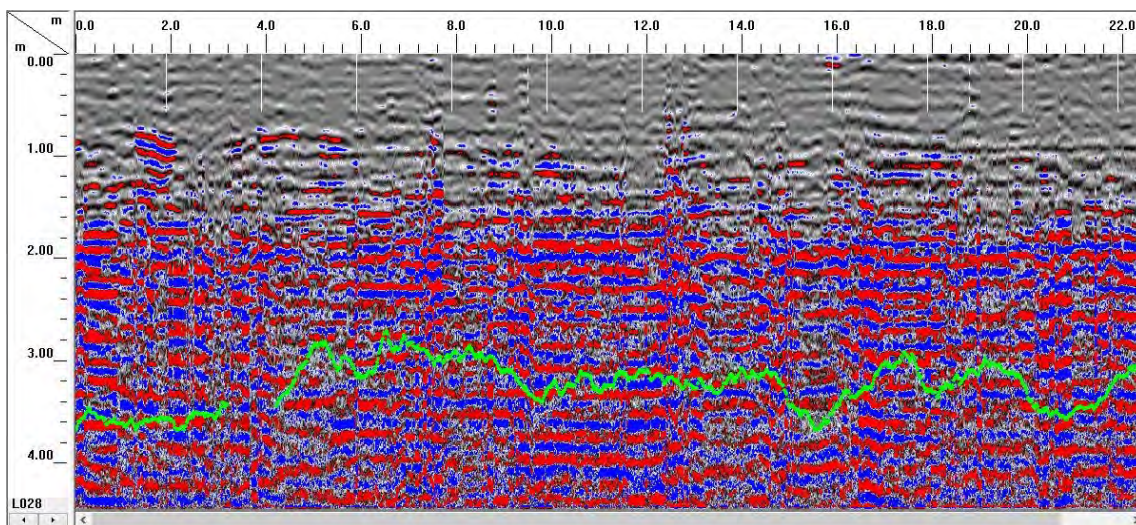


Figure 6, Transect 20, at 10 meters on the grid. Although very difficult if not impossible to interpret, there are clues that the soils are disturbed here.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although the conditions under which the survey was undertaken were the most difficult I ever experienced, I do believe that some of the data collected do show some results indicating that these largely disturbed area is disturbed by the mill and possible foundations may be found. We can be fairly certain that the disturbances strata and the clustered anomalies are most likely to be related to McNally's Mill and not other historic activities which would not have impacted the soils as much as shown in the GPR transects.

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