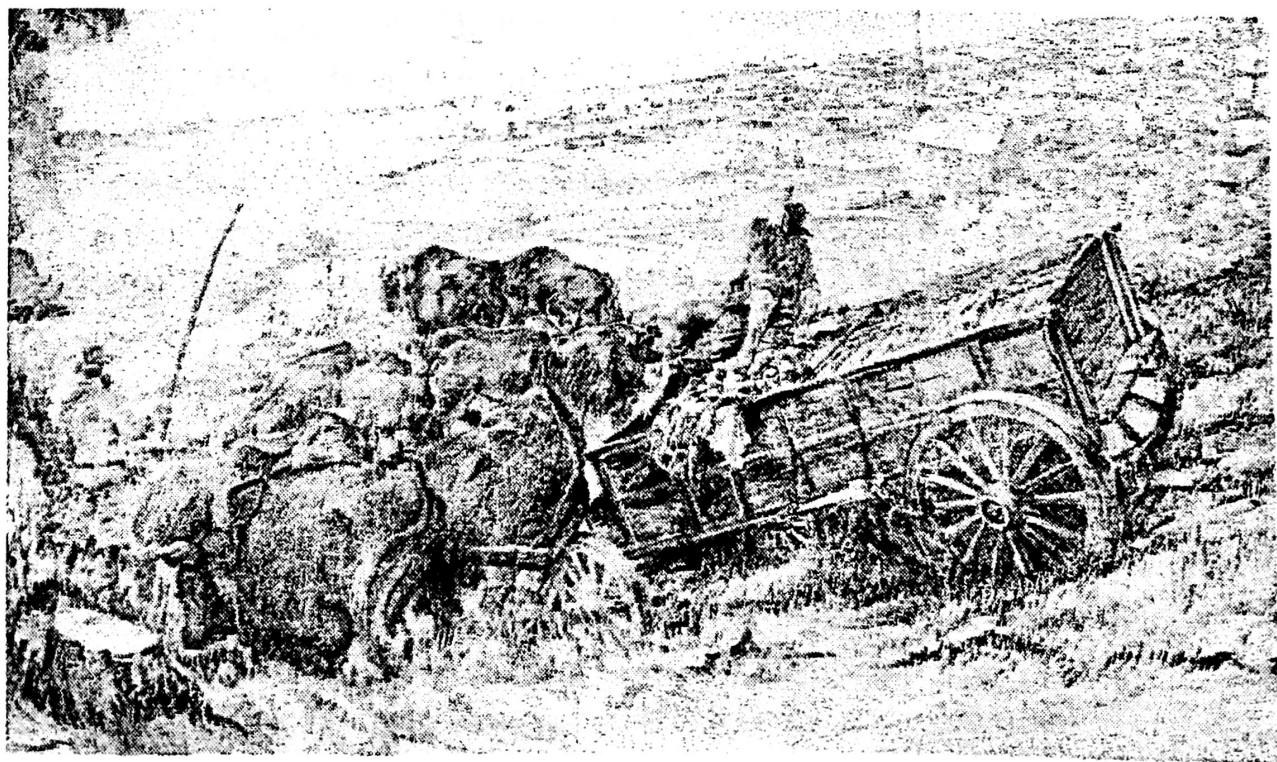


limestone escarpment on the east side of Lake Winnebago. The party curled around the south end of the lake (where Doty would lay out the village of Fond du Lac in 1836) and passed between the First and Second lakes (now Kegonsa and Waubesa) of the Four Lakes district. Passing Blue Mound, the trio followed the ridge that separated the Wisconsin River Valley from the rivers that flowed to the south (the "Military Ridge" or U.S. Highway 18 today). Crossing the Wisconsin near its mouth, the party ended its journey at Fort Crawford.

Doty's report of his journey dramatized the feasibility of the route and aroused the interest of the Army, which saw advantages in a road connecting its Wisconsin forts. In July 1832, at the height of the scare caused by Black Hawk, Congress appropriated \$5,000 to lay out a road across Wisconsin, connecting the three forts, Howard, Winnebago and Crawford. Doty, named a civilian member of the survey commission, promptly laid out a route—blazed trees in the forest and crossed sticks on the prairie—that generally followed the path he had taken in 1829. Army engineers built the road between 1835 and 1837. Congress specified that the road be "cut out thirty feet wide; all trees less than twelve inches in diame-



*Hauling lead from Mineral Point to Cassville on the Mississippi in the 1830s. An imaginary drawing by I.E. Blair, created for the Wisconsin Highway Commission in 1948.*

ter will be felled within six inches of the ground; and those of greater diameter within twelve inches; the stumps to be hollowed the center, so as to retain the rain that they may more readily decay. Though built to specifications, the road for many years was little more than a trail of stumps through the wilderness, with crude log bridges across the streams. After completing the main route in 1833, the Army built a spur through Mineral Point to Galena.

With the promise of transportation that would afford access to national and world markets, Doty turned his energies to the founding of townsites. The establishment of Fond du Lac exemplifies his methods. The reedy marshes where the Fond du Lac River lazily rolls into Lake Winnebago had long been a favorite wintering place of French fur traders who found there abundant fish and game. The site lay astride the Military Road, and it had water access to Lake Michigan by way of the Fox River. In 1835 Doty and a Green Bay speculator purchased 3,500 acres in the fertile valley, all of it within the limits of the present-day city of Fond du Lac. With other investors they founded the Fond du Lac Company, which platted the village and erected a double-sized log house that served as a tavern. In 1838 Doty built some frame houses in the town and found farmers to occupy them. He avoided tying up his money in land, preferring instead to invest in the village improvements. Roads, canals and, in the 1850s, railroads attracted him the most. He would then use the profits from these projects to establish another strategically located townsite. He was not averse, however, to investing in towns founded by others when he saw their growth potential. Milwaukee was one of these.



## Birth of Milwaukee

Except for Green Bay, the western shore of Lake Michigan had no natural harbors capable of handling commercial shipping. Small rivers, which promised access to the interior, did give rise to some aspiring lake ports, however. The most successful of these by far was Milwaukee. The name was of Indian origin, first recorded as Melleoiki by a French missionary in 1679. The Milwaukee River,

which drains a rich landscape to the south and east of Lake Winnebago, meanders into Lake Michigan through substantial bluffs that attracted Indian inhabitants from the earliest times. French traders visited the mouth of the river annually during the 18th century, and beginning in the 1790s there was a tiny community of year-round French and Indian residents.

The story of the "polyglot village that became a metropolis" began in 1818 when Solomon Juneau, an agent of Astor's American Fur Company, set up a trading post on the bank of the river. Juneau was an enterprising man, but this was not immediately evident because the Indians owned the land and were his only customers. A map of the Michigan Territory published in 1830 pictured an Indian village with two white families, Juneau and his brother, on the "Milwauky River." The Indian cessions of 1833 opened the way for the development but did not immediately remove Indians from the scene. A caravan of ox teams carried many of them westward (probably to Iowa or Nebraska) in 1838, but blanketed Indians could be seen patrolling the streets of the lakeside village as late as the 1850s.

On the heels of the Indian cession in the fall of 1833 Juneau formed a partnership with Green Bay speculator Morgan Martin (who had accompanied Doty on his 1829 overland journey), by which Juneau gave Martin a half-interest in his preemptive claim to the lands along the east side of the river in return for Martin's money and expertise. The following spring the pair enclosed "the best parts" of Juneau's claim with posts, logs and a "handsome little building," all designed to substantiate Juneau's claim when the land was surveyed and put up for sale at the Green Bay land office. Before the lands went up for sale, Byron Kilbourn, public surveyor for the Michigan Territory, posted a claim to the lands on the west side of the Milwaukee River. He rejected a Martin-Juneau offer to cooperate, and as a result the city originated as two townsites, Juneautown and Kilbourntown.

By July 1835, when the Green Bay office began to offer Milwaukee lands for sale, squatters had taken possession of the site "in swarms," and Juneau was getting \$500 to \$600 bids for half-acre

lots within his claim before he even acquired them from the government. When the land office finally opened, Juneau/Mar Kilbourn gained possession of their claims at little more than the government minimum of \$1.25 an acre.

In the ferocious land speculation that enveloped Wisconsin 1835-36 Milwaukee was the biggest prize of all because of its position as a lake port. By early 1836 Juneau was a rich man, reputedly \$100,000 and doing a daily business of \$8,000 to \$10,000. Doty was in the midst of the land fever. At the opening of the sale he purchased \$5,000 in tracts at the mouth of the Milwaukee River and sold them a year later at a 500 percent profit. Kilbourn, on the other hand, lost much of his fortune in an ill-fated effort to build a canal connecting his portion of Milwaukee with the Rock River.

A traveler who arrived in Milwaukee in July 1836 reported a city of 50 houses and 1,208 people where, he wrote in astonishment, "months ago there were but two families!" The disparity between speculation and available shelter was explained, in part, by other accounts. One journalist noted that "Everyday, almost, new frames were erected. Men's hats were crammed with maps of paper towns." Owners of vacant lots commanded high rents for the privilege of selling goods on their property. One observer claimed that profits could be made simply by "standing around, i.e., watching the land market for bargains."

A speculative mania engrossed the entire country in 1836. Americans of every social order sought instant wealth through investments in city lots, wharves, canals and railroads. President Andrew Jackson, a frontiersman accustomed to calculating wealth in terms of land, soil that could be sifted or coin that could be bit into, blamed the speculative fever on the proliferation of banks and paper money. In 1836 he directed the treasury to accept only gold or silver coin in payment for public lands. The Specie Circular, which went into effect August 15, brought the frenzied trading in Wisconsin to an abrupt halt. Gold and silver had always been in short supply in the West; previously traded by barter or in paper notes issued by local banks. The optimism that had sparked the boom collapsed, as investors who had worked on borrowed money found themselves unable to repay their loans, meet interest demands, or pay their tax assessments. Government foreclos-