

# IRON PIONEERS

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BOOK ONE

*a novel*

Tyler R. Tichelaar

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New York Lincoln Shanghai

**IRON PIONEERS  
BOOK ONE**

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“The beginnings, therefore, of this great iron industry are historically important and are of interest to every citizen in the United States, for there is not a man or woman today living who has not been, directly or indirectly, benefited by the great mineral wealth of the Lake Superior country and the labor of winning it and working it into the arts.... Has it not the elements in it out of which to weave the fabric of the great American novel so long expected and so long delayed? For the story is distinctly American. Indeed there is nothing more distinctly American.”

—Ralph Williams, in his biography of Marquette’s iron pioneer *The Honorable Peter White: A Biographical Sketch of the Lake Superior Iron Country* (1905)

## PRINCIPAL FAMILIES IN IRON PIONEERS

### **The Bergmanns**

Fritz Bergmann—a German immigrant  
Molly Bergmann—his wife, an Irish immigrant  
Karl Bergmann—their son  
Kathy Bergmann—their daughter

### **The Brookfields**

Lucius Brookfield—family patriarch, partner to Gerald Henning in building a forge  
Rebecca Brookfield—his wife, a staunch Methodist  
Omelia Brookfield—Lucius and Rebecca's daughter who remains in New York  
Darius Brookfield—Lucius and Rebecca's son who disappeared years ago on the Oregon Trail  
Sophia Rockford—Lucius and Rebecca's daughter, second wife of Gerald Henning  
George Rockford—Sophia's first husband  
Caleb Rockford—George and Sophia's son  
Cordelia Whitman—Lucius and Rebecca's daughter, proprietor of a boarding house  
Nathaniel Whitman—Cordelia's husband  
Jacob Whitman—Nathaniel and Cordelia's son  
Edna Whitman—Nathaniel and Cordelia's daughter

### **The Dalrymples**

Arthur Dalrymple—family patriarch, born in Nova Scotia  
Charles Dalrymple—his son, a carpenter  
Christina Dalrymple—Charles's wife  
Margaret Dalrymple—Charles and Christina's daughter, born in a boarding house  
Sarah Dalrymple—Charles and Christina's daughter  
Charles Dalrymple Jr.—Charles and Christina's son

### **The Hennings**

Gerald Henning—a wealthy businessman from Boston  
Clara Henning—his first wife, from a Boston high society family  
Agnes Henning—Gerald and Clara’s daughter  
Madeleine Henning—Gerald’s daughter by his second wife, Sophia

### **The Varins**

Jean Varin—a French Canadian  
Suzanne Varin—his wife  
Amedee—Suzanne’s brother

### **Other Principal Characters**

Ben—logging partner to Karl Bergmann  
Lazarus Carew—a stable boy, son of Cornish immigrants  
Patrick McCarey—an Irish immigrant  
Joseph Montoni—an Italian saloonkeeper  
Therese—Montoni’s sister

### **Historical Persons in Iron Pioneers**

Captain Atkins—captain of the *Jay Morse*  
Frederic Baraga—“the Snowshoe Priest”—missionary and first Marquette  
Diocese bishop  
Mrs. Bignall—mother of the first white child born in Marquette  
Pamelia Bishop—the Mother of Methodism in Marquette  
Captain Bridges—captain of the tug *Dudley*  
The Calls—prosperous family who owned a house on Ridge Street  
Father Duroc—Catholic priest  
Cullen Eddy—Justice of the Peace  
Heman Ely—early Marquette businessman  
Sam Ely—first president of the First National Bank  
Philo Everett—Marquette businessman and banker  
Robert Graveraet—a founder of Marquette  
Amos Harlow—principal founder of Marquette  
Olive Harlow—his wife  
Martha Bacon—Olive Harlow’s mother  
Charles Kawbawgam—Last Chief of the Chippewa  
Charlotte Kawbawgam—his wife

Father Kenny—pastor of St. Peter's Cathedral  
Jacques LePique—Kawbawgam's brother-in-law  
Chief Marji Gesick—Charlotte's father, who led the white men to the iron ore  
in 1844  
John Munro Longyear—landlooker and real estate agent  
Father Jacques Marquette—seventeenth century, Jesuit missionary  
The Maynards—passengers on the *Jay Morse*  
Captain Samuel Moody—builder of Marquette's first dock, Civil War soldier  
Jay Morse—Marquette businessman, owner of a pleasure yacht  
Bishop Mrak—second bishop of the Marquette diocese  
Colonel Pickands—partner of Jay Morse  
Edmund Remington—Civil War soldier  
Joe Roleau—passenger on the *Jay Morse*  
Reverend Safford—Episcopalian minister  
Alfred Swineford—owner of the *Mining Journal*, later governor of Alaska  
Bishop Vertin—third bishop of the Marquette diocese  
Mrs. Wheelock—proprietor of one of Marquette's first boarding houses  
Jerome White—Civil War soldier  
Peter White—Marquette businessman, early settler, and civic benefactor

# Prologue

## 1671

For millions of years the land waited, unconscious of its waiting. Then came the glaciers. Massive ice sheets moved down from the Arctic and spread steadily farther and farther south over what would one day be the region called Michigan. The glaciers moved rapidly, pushing the mile thick ice into the earth and carving out the continent of North America. Only after tens of thousands of years did the great ice blanket begin to withdraw, and only eight thousand years before the birth of Christ, it left behind a large peninsula projecting out into newly carved lakes.

One day, this new land would be the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, but for now, it was a virgin, pristine country, untouched by man. Again the land waited, waited for people to cross the lakes and rivers that served as its borders. When they came, these people would discover a splendid and mighty forest, through which ran streams rich in fish, among whose trees hid deer, bear and squirrel, chipmunk and beaver, and deep beneath the earth was the mineral wealth of iron, gold, and copper. The people would claim the land's bountiful riches, but the land demanded a price in return—it protected itself with harsh winters that only the truly courageous men and women, those who admired Nature's magnificence, were willing to face. The climate would drive many a coward away, while many a true child of Nature would find here a richness of spirit surpassing all the earth's minerals.

In prehistoric times, this land may have had many visitors, but no record is left of them. First remembered are the Anishabe, who called themselves "the People". They became the People of the land, claiming it as their own, not by government deeds, not by belief in property, but by their appreciation of this

splendid wilderness, their respect for its stern strength, and their gratitude for its bounty.

Then came the white men, and with them they brought their religion, their Christianity, their belief in the one God. The white men told the People it was their own God who had created this magnificent wilderness land. The People, the Anishabe, or the Ojibwa as the French would name them, the Chippewa as the English would mispronounce their French name, would largely come to accept the religious teachings of the white men. The Christian God was not dissimilar to the Great Spirit the People believed was Creator of the world. But they would find it hard to believe this precious land was not guarded by many spirits, spirits similar to what the Christians called guardian angels. The People believed there were spirits in the beasts and the berry bushes, in the clouds and the waterfalls, in the sun and the seas, in the rivers, the rocks, and the great oak trees. Here in this garden paradise, each branch of Nature was individually blessed. These guardian spirits hid themselves away from white men's eyes, but once in a great while, a white man might hear a spirit's voice mixed in with the wind, or he might feel a pleasing tingle as a water sprite brushed against him during a swim in a lake. When white men loved the land as well as did the People, the spirits welcomed, befriended, and protected them.

The white men and their religion came to this land in the seventeenth century of the Christian era. Among them came a Jesuit priest, a man short, strong, and devoted to spreading the word of God among the People. He found they had a strong faith, as strong as the beliefs of his own civilized French brothers and sisters. On this day, when our story begins, the Jesuit, the Black Robe, as the People called him, Father Marquette, as history has recorded his name, had come to the land with a couple of the People for his guides and a few French voyageurs who had traveled with him from Quebec. He had come to preach God's kingdom on earth, to convert the land and its people to Christianity.

The People held great festivities to greet the Black Robe, festivities culminating in celebration of the Mass. Surely, this day had seen the greatest conversion of the People in the New World. Hundreds from throughout the peninsula had journeyed to this central location along the shore of Lake Superior, the shore of Gitchee Gumee. They had come, the men and the women, the elders and the children, the chiefs and the lowliest members of the great People. Some four or five hundred of these new but devout Christians were present. They had traveled from over a hundred miles away, from all along the shores and even miles inland from the other Great Lakes. They had come by



foot and by canoe to be present. Two hundred canoes lay along Lake Superior's beach, and each person brought in them was eager to attend the Mass.

The Jesuit felt truly blessed. He was thousands of miles from his native France, hundreds of miles even from Montreal and the last real outposts of civilized man. He had once been told the native people of this lake region were savages, but they had embraced him as one of their own, even as an elder to whom they showed great respect. Here as he never could have elsewhere, he was reaping God's plenty, bringing to the Mother Church the souls of hundreds who without him would never have heard the Gospel or received the sacraments. And how attentive the People were when he said Mass! Most of them did not understand his French tongue, much less the Mass's Latin words, but they had the faith of children, the innocent faith Christ had proclaimed necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; the priest did not doubt these good people would enter that kingdom. Yet even he could not foresee their faithfulness in the retelling of this event in their legends for generations to come. Most of them would never see another Black Robe, neither would their children or grandchildren, but the stories of how this priest had loved them would be remembered until another would come, a hundred or more years from now, and that future servant of God would find the People still steadfast in their faith and longing to be baptized as once had been their forefathers by this honored Black Robe.

All seemed fruitful to Father Marquette this evening. He loved this faithful, goodhearted people, and he saw God present in their beautiful land. There was nothing in France to compare to this wilderness splendor; he admitted to this land's superiority even when he felt most homesick for his native French village.

"Come, we climb Tadosh," said an Ojibwa chief to the priest who rested upon the beach. Father Marquette took a second to translate the meaning of this request. The People wished to honor him for his kindness by showing him the splendid view of their land from the nearby mountaintop. Quickly a band of the Ojibwa gathered to form the excursion, and Father Marquette, joined by one of his voyageurs, accompanied them along the shore to the mountain called Tadosh.

It had been a warm, fatiguing day, but the Jesuit felt energized by the successful conversions he had made, and he could not refuse this gracious invitation. It was a long hike along the beach, and then a strenuous climb up the mountain called Tadosh. The mountain rose up, a towering granite summit nearly five hundred feet above Lake Superior. The overgrowth was so thick that

the party had to travel in single file. The tree branches snapped in the Jesuit's face, and the bushes scratched at his long robe. Up the party climbed for half an hour, panting yet never resting. Fifty feet from the top, the trees almost disappeared and the soil turned into solid rock. One of the People offered Father Marquette his arm, but the Jesuit declined, determined to show his own strength; his many difficult journeys made this climb one of little effort. Jesting, he offered to carry the Ojibwa up on his back. Then smiling, they climbed up together, side by side, while the French voyageur followed.

Upon reaching the summit, Father Marquette found his efforts well repaid. He could see several islands lying spread out along the lakeshore, and to his right was Presque Isle, the most beautiful little peninsula on Lake Superior. Out across the lake the view was spectacular as the water gradually faded into the horizon; dark indigo blended into light shades of blue revealing shallow water that in the distance appeared like clouds with little islands poking up through them. The Black Robe imagined he was viewing Heaven spread before him among the cloud-like waters. For years he had been traveling on the Great Lakes, but at such moments as this one, he never failed to experience awe as the lakes changed hourly from being bathed in rays of sunlight to being darkened by overcast skies; each lighting revealed a new wonder upon the waters. Father Marquette had never seen the lake look so placid as today's cloudy appearance. What a contrast from the rolling waves he frequently experienced while plummeting over the water in his canoe. The beach was golden and warm while the water looked refreshing as its breezes blew inland, cooling the thick forests. Behind him, the Jesuit could see the towering pines, birches, maples and oaks, that spread into the horizon. It was an uncharted region, a bountiful country reminiscent of the biblical promised land flowing with milk and honey. He saw that the bay would provide shelter and that it served as an outlet from the two nearby rivers. It would be an ideal settlement in years to come. He imagined his own French people would someday settle this land, and he hoped they would do so peacefully, sharing it with the People whom he loved.

The wind rustled through the leaves, like a whispering voice, almost like the voice of God uttering a blessing; silently, the Jesuit prayed the land would always know peace and fellowship among its inhabitants, whomever they might be.

"It is a beautiful country, isn't it, Varin?" he said to his voyageur friend.

Pierre Varin looked all about him, agreeing with the Jesuit. He was pleased to be in this good land with this good man. Like Father Marquette, he felt more at home here than in his native France.

“I do not know whether Heaven could be this beautiful,” Varin replied, patting his friend on the back. “But come, Father, we should go so we can travel yet before nightfall.”

The party descended the little mountain. They walked back to the lakeshore and the waiting canoes. The Jesuit paused to give a final blessing to the newly faithful Christian People while Pierre, his fellow voyageurs, and the Ojibwa guides prepared to leave.

As the canoes pushed off from the shore, Father Marquette could not know how well his prayer would be heard. Nor could he foresee that someday an important city would be built along this bay. The city would be remote from the troubles of the world, yet play an important role in the history of its nation. Its name would honor this holy man, and its people would bravely love this land as much as he had.

## 1849

The schooner swept over the stunning blue waves of Lake Superior. On board, Clara Henning looked across the water to the forests of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. All she had seen since the boat had left the little port of Sault Sainte Marie was mile after mile of water and wooded shoreline. As the wind lifted a chilling water spray off the lake, Clara reflected that there was nothing here but wilderness, miles and miles distant from roads, trains, and civilization. In a couple hours, the schooner would arrive at its destination, the new settlement of Worcester, Michigan—a handful of small, hastily constructed wooden buildings sheltered along a bay. Clara suspected this cramped schooner was the most comfort she would know for months to come.

Gerald had warned her what their new home would be like, but at nineteen, she had let her youthful determination convince her she could overcome any obstacle and handle any hardship. Gerald had been determined to come here, and as his wife, she must follow. Back in Boston, the thought of settling in a new land had seemed a romantic adventure to share with her new husband. Now, despite the lush green trees, and the sandy golden beaches, she began to fear what wild animals or unfriendly Indians might lurk in those woods, and she sensed the loneliness to come of being so far from her family. All she now had was Gerald; she loved him, but she had only known him as a member of Boston society, not as the adventurer and entrepreneur he wished to become.

Clara looked across the deck at her handsome husband; he was engaged in conversation with Mr. Harlow, the founder of the new settlement. Clara admired Gerald's manly figure, its strength reassuring her she had made the right decision to come here. She had known, even before he proposed to her, that there could be no other man in her life; she would follow him wherever he led her, even though it meant abandoning the only world she knew, including her family and all the advantages of Boston society. She drew upon an inner

strength formerly repressed by a world of tea party etiquette; she told herself to revel in this new freedom, to prepare herself to experience the greatest adventure of her life.

Three months ago, she had never dreamed of a life in the wilderness. She and Gerald had just then been engaged, with a wedding date set for mid-June. Clara had imagined herself continuing her role in Boston society as a wife and mother. But one May evening, just as the Wilson family finished dessert, Gerald had called with an unexpected announcement.

“In all fairness to Clara before the wedding, I wanted to let you know my future prospects have dramatically changed,” Gerald had said, standing awkwardly as the family remained seated at the dining room table.

“Is there something wrong?” Mrs. Wilson had asked, fearing scandal or loss of fortune would deter her daughter’s marriage.

“No, please think of this as an opportunity,” Gerald had replied. “You may have heard that great deposits of iron have recently been discovered in Northern Michigan. My father has had some business dealings with a Mr. Harlow of Worcester, and he and a few other businessmen—a Mr. Edward Clarke and Mr. Waterman Fisher, also of Worcester, and a Mr. Robert Graveraet of Michigan, have proposed establishing a settlement on the south shore of Lake Superior to provide a harbor and to set up forges so iron ore can be shipped to the major industrial cities. My father wishes to be involved in these enterprises, and consequently, I’m going to the region to bring the plans to fruition.”

“But when are you going?” Mrs. Wilson had asked. “We can’t postpone the wedding after all the preparations we’ve made.”

“No, it won’t effect the wedding,” Gerald had replied. “I won’t leave until the end of July. What it does mean is that Clara and I, if she’ll still have me, will be moving to Michigan.”

“Michigan!” said Mrs. Wilson, while Clara’s grandmother looked astonished. Mr. Wilson was so surprised he lay down his dessert fork.

“I need to live there to oversee the business,” Gerald had said. “My father and Mr. Harlow believe there’s a fortune to be made in the iron industry—that whole area could develop into a great industrial empire to out rival any now existing in this country. It’s an opportunity we cannot afford to pass up.”

“Yes, I’ve heard there is great potential in that region,” Mr. Wilson had said, always interested in business.

Mrs. Wilson, however, while she reaped the benefits of abundant money, was ignorant of the commercial details that produced her husband’s wealth.

Gerald Henning's arguments made no impact on a woman who felt only the loss of her daughter and the social status planned for her.

"You cannot expect Clara to travel hundreds of miles from home to some wilderness," she said. "Why there must be savage Indians there! It wouldn't be safe. It's unthinkable. You're foolish even to think of going."

"Eveline," her husband reprimanded.

"Well, it is foolish," Mrs. Wilson repeated.

"There are Indians in the area," said Gerald. "They are Chippewa, and by all accounts, they're friendly to settlers. Clara has nothing to fear. I'll build her a good home, and while I can't give her all the advantages and niceties of Boston, I'll provide her with all necessities, and I'll care for her to the utmost of my being."

"I know you will, Gerald," Clara said, feeling safe whenever her lover was near.

"It would be beneath Clara's station," Mrs. Wilson said. Clara and her grandmother exchanged smiles; they both knew her mother's words would lead to a recital of the family history. "No member of the Wilson family would go trudging through the wilderness like some Indian squaw. And my own family, the Lytes, have been leaders of Boston society since before the Revolution. No one in this family would think of living such an existence. If my father were alive today, he would roll over in his grave at the mere thought."

"If he were alive," chuckled Mr. Wilson, "he wouldn't be in the grave to roll over."

Mrs. Wilson flashed indignant eyes at her husband. Generally, he gave way to her temper, but on matters of business, he would not be superseded, and Clara's financial interests were uppermost in his mind, even over concern for her physical safety or social mobility.

"Like Mrs. Wilson," he said, addressing Gerald, "I am concerned for Clara's welfare, and it will be difficult for us to have our only child so far from home, but she is an adult and capable of making her own decisions. If she agrees to the proposition, then you have our blessing."

Clara's heart beat heavily for a moment. She looked about the room, at the painting of her ancestor Governor Bradstreet on one end, on the other wall the painting of her Grandfather Lyte, who had made his fortune in shipping. Across from her was her mother's china—really her great-grandmother's—imported from France just before that country's revolution, locked up in the hutch cabinet like Marie Antoinette protecting herself from exposure to the everyday world. The cabinet itself was a great, heavy, polished mahogany

piece, bought during her parents' honeymoon from the finest furniture manufacturer in New York City. Could she leave all these priceless possessions? When her parents were gone, would she regret if these items were not hers? But they were only things—nothing more. They were not life; they were not love; they would not keep her warm at night like Gerald's strong arms. Her heart still beating, she made her reply.

"I told Gerald I would be his wife, so I will go wherever he thinks best."

She was not without some inner hesitation, but once her words were spoken, she knew she would not change her mind. When Gerald's face lit with a tremendous smile, she felt confirmed in her decision.

"Clara, don't be foolish!" Mrs. Wilson had replied. "You don't want to live in the woods with a bunch of grimy miners and lumberjacks. And what about your children? How will they be educated there? They'll be deprived of all culture, and they'll never know their grandparents."

Clara felt confused. She simply wanted to go with Gerald. The thought of children had not been included in her decision, but secretly, she believed her own education had been a waste of time; what practical purpose was served by learning to play the piano or to write rhyming couplets? With Gerald, she might find real work to do, similar to the work so many women in Boston already did, but which she was forbidden to join in because of her social station. She did not know how to explain that she did not want her life to be an imitation of her mother's, but she knew she must leave before she suffocated in Boston's society.

"May I speak my mind?" Grandmother Lyte had then asked.

"Of course," said Mr. Wilson.

"I think Eveline is partially correct; it will be difficult for Clara to leave Boston and start a new life in a wilderness a thousand miles away. I can understand Eveline's fear of never seeing her grandchildren since Clara is my only granddaughter, and I will be sad to see her leave. But Eveline is wrong to think it beneath Clara's social station to make such a journey. That's just a lot of nonsense. It's true the Lytes are a prominent family in Boston with a long family heritage. But if we are to be proud of that heritage, we should embrace the courage of our ancestors, not become complacent." Mrs. Lyte's glowing face and succinct words recalled generations of family puritans and patriots who had struggled bravely, not just for the fancy china teapot on the dining room table, but for the freedom to choose a teapot or a log cabin or both.

"My grandfather," Mrs. Lyte continued, "did not say we couldn't defeat the British, though in his heart he may have feared it was true; like countless brave

colonists, he fought for what he believed in so we could be Americans. And what of our ancestors who came before that? They came over on the *Arbella* to help found the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. One of them was our ancestress, Anne Bradstreet. When she arrived in the New World, she wrote that she feared the wilderness, but she trusted in God and herself. She and her family had a dream of freedom, and they lived and fought for that dream everyday of their lives. In her poetry, we can read how she daily faced every adversity, from the death of loved ones to the burning of her house, but it did not break her trust in God. After the sacrifices of such ancestors, we cannot be cowards; we must carry on their work for the betterment of this country. If an adventure lies before Clara, and if her heart says another life will make her happier, then she should go with Gerald and my blessings shall go with them.”

“Thank you, Grandmother,” Clara had replied, her eyes tearing up to be so well understood by the dear old woman.

“I still don’t think Clara will have a better life than here,” grumbled Mrs. Wilson, but no one was listening to her now.

Gerald was asked to stay for dessert, and he remained long after to discuss his and Clara’s future. Clara listened as he described the far away region that would be her home; she imagined it would be exciting to live in that wilderness land, to help build a new community, just as her ancestress, Anne Bradstreet, and so many others had done when they came to Massachusetts Bay.

That dinner conversation had been three months ago, but as Clara caught the first glimpses of the land where she would now live, she still did not regret her decision to marry Gerald; she was proud of her husband’s courage to come here, even though he knew little about mining, or iron forges and blooming, or how to build a house and survive a winter in the wilderness. He had determination and intelligence, and those traits would provide a home for them. And Clara promised herself she would be not just a wife but a helpmate, doing whatever necessary for their survival and prosperity. She still had her doubts, but she would not let fear overcome her resolve; before this strange land could defeat her, she would befriend it.

“Clara, there it is!” Gerald exclaimed. She turned in the direction he pointed as he came and linked his arm in hers. She dimly made out a few logs floating in the water; in another minute, they were discernible as a small dock. Then between the trees a couple wooden structures became visible.

“There’s Worcester,” said Mr. Harlow, joining them on deck.

“I’m sure your wife will be pleased to see you,” Clara told him. Mr. Harlow had met them in Sault Sainte Marie, where he had come to fetch more supplies



and then return to the settlement. Meanwhile, his wife and mother-in-law had traveled on to the settlement alone and taken up residence in an old fishing hut Mr. Harlow had found to serve as their first house. Clara already hoped the Harlow women would be her friends; she would need the tender sound of female voices in this rugged land, and if Mrs. Harlow and her mother could do so much on their own, Clara knew she could succeed with Gerald's support.

"Yes, I've missed my wife," said Mr. Harlow, "but now we'll be together, ready to begin our new life here."

The schooner turned into the bay and drew up to the dock, from which rose a little uphill path surrounded by lush green trees that stretched miles and miles inland to create a near impenetrable forest. On the dock was Mrs. Harlow, waiting for her husband to step off from the boat. Clara and Gerald waited politely as the long separated husband and wife embraced. Then Mr. Harlow made introductions all around. Twenty people—half the community—had shown up to greet the boat, enough people nearly to fill the dock. Clara felt overwhelmed and immediately forgot everyone's name, except that of Mrs. Wheelock, who had just started a boarding house.

"You must be tired," Mrs. Wheelock said. "Come with me. I'll make you a good supper and then you can go to bed early. There'll be plenty of time in the morning to find your plot of land and start building a home."

Clara and Gerald followed the kind woman to her little wooden structure where they would stay until Gerald had built them a house. After supper, the newlyweds went to their chamber, a corner of a room with sheets for walls. There were a few other boarders, but Clara was so tired she simply undressed, then waited for Gerald. When he climbed into bed, she cuddled into his arm. She loved that he already smelled like the surrounding pine trees. She was exhausted, yet content to have arrived here, and in the morning, she told herself she would be well rested and prepared to face the opportunity before them.



When Clara woke, it took her a few seconds to remember she was no longer on a boat, or a train, or in her comfortable bed back in Boston. Above her was a wooden roof with a crack that revealed the sky. She crawled out of bed and onto boards laid across a dirt floor. Since Gerald was already gone, she feared she had slept later than she should; from the crack in the ceiling, she could tell it was already daylight. Last night, she had been relieved to have a roof over her

head and a bed to sleep in, but now this dingy little partition of a room made her hope Gerald would not be long in building her a decent house.

Last night, she had hardly more than glanced at the other buildings in the village. She had noted the rough exterior of the Harlows' house and that of Mr. Harlow's assistant. Both buildings had been rundown fishing huts moved from farther down the lakeshore to serve as temporary residences. Clara was surprised to find herself envious that Mrs. Harlow had her own house, no matter how dilapidated its condition. Even if at this moment, Gerald were purchasing them a plot of land to build on, she knew she could not expect more than a small one room cabin this first year. Winters here were supposed to be long and harsh and to arrive early, so Gerald would have to build soon and spare no time for fancy details if they were to have a shelter before the first snowfall. It was August, but as Clara emerged from her makeshift bedroom, she could already imagine the fierce winter winds.

She found Mrs. Wheelock in the kitchen cooking breakfast.

"Your husband went to look around the village, but he told me to let you sleep," said Mrs. Wheelock. "I know how tiring the long journey here can be."

Clara thanked her hostess as Mrs. Wheelock placed eggs and bread before her. She wished Gerald were here, but she understood he had work to do. Mrs. Wheelock said he had promised to return by noon, and he had suggested she call on Mrs. Harlow that morning.

"I'll visit her as soon as I finish eating," Clara replied. Mrs. Wheelock planned to go wash up the dishes, but Clara asked her landlady to stay and talk while she ate, in return that she help her with the dishes. Clara had never washed a dish in her life, but she was not so spoiled that she did not understand she would have no servants here as she had in Boston.

Mrs. Wheelock gladly sat down to rest a few minutes. She told Clara how quickly her boarding house had filled with guests, and that she had her hands full cooking and doing laundry for the inmates. She was thankful to have a female guest if only to have someone to talk with. Clara had nearly finished her breakfast when a young man stepped into the house. He was about her age; Clara assumed he was Mrs. Wheelock's son until he introduced himself.

"Hello, I'm Peter White," he said. "I'm a boarder here. You must be Mrs. Henning."

"Yes, I'm pleased to meet you," she replied, taking his offered hand.

"Peter is one of the youngest and most active members of our settlement," said Mrs. Wheelock. "In fact, he helped to build the first dock. Peter, why don't you tell Mrs. Henning about it?"

Peter laughed as Clara prepared herself for a humorous tale.

“Well, any city needs a good dock,” began Peter, “and we were determined ours would be one of the best. Captain Moody was in charge, and in no time at all, he had us hauling entire trees into the water and piling them crossways until we had built two tiers from the lake bottom up level with the water. Then we covered it all with sand and rocks. In just two days, we had the dock finished. We believed we had accomplished the first step in transforming Worcester into a future industrial metropolis. We imagined a hundred years from now our descendants would look upon the dock and praise us for our ingenuity.”

Clara smiled at Peter’s self-mocking tone.

“Next morning, imagine our surprise when we discovered one of Lake Superior’s calmest days had been enough to wash the dock away. Not a single rock or log was left behind to mark where it had been. The sand was so smooth you never would have known the dock existed. How easily man’s grandest schemes succumb to Nature’s power.”

There was a moment’s pause while Peter smirked. Then Mrs. Wheelock scolded, “Peter, be fair. Finish the story.”

Peter grinned but obeyed.

“The entire episode was so comically tragic I could not help but feel some record of it should remain for the city’s future annals. I took a stick and wrote on the sand, ‘This is the spot where Capt. Moody built his dock.’ Well, Captain Moody took one look at that and wiped it away with his feet. He was apparently not as amused as I was, and he told me I would be discharged from his service at the end of the month.”

Clara had been smiling, but the story’s conclusion saddened her.

“What a shame. You didn’t mean any harm by it, and it was as much your work as his that failed.”

“I was sorry to offend him,” Peter confessed, “but he hasn’t dismissed me yet. Either he quickly got over his temper or he’s forgotten about it. I’m certainly not going to remind him.”

“I’m sure Captain Moody has forgiven you by now,” said Mrs. Wheelock. “He realizes what a blessing you’ve been lately. Mrs. Henning, I don’t wish to scare you, but there’s been an outbreak of typhoid fever here. Nearly everyone has now recovered, so there shouldn’t be anything to worry about, but we can all thank Peter for his hard work. He has bravely cared for the sick, even bathing them at risk to himself.”

Peter ignored the praise to explain further. “We recently had a large number of foreigners arrive in the settlement. Mr. Graveraet brought them up by boat

from Milwaukee to work. Most of them are German, but there are a few Irish and French among them. Almost all of them got typhoid on the trip here and several died before they arrived. It's a sad situation, so I did what I could for them. Everyone has been taking turns helping."

"It isn't as bad as we first feared," Mrs. Wheelock told Clara. "We thought it might be cholera; that was enough to scare the local Indians into deserting the area, but then Dr. Rogers determined it was only typhoid, though that's bad enough."

"There's only a handful still recovering," Peter added. "And no one else has contracted it, so it can't be contagious anymore. I'm sure it's nothing to be concerned over, but we could use a little more help caring for the sick."

"Oh," said Clara, terrified at the thought, yet anxious to do her share of work in the new community; she knew she would need friends to lend her a hand in future hardships. "I'd be happy to help with the nursing."

"We wouldn't want you to become ill too," warned Mrs. Wheelock.

"Oh, but I can't let those people suffer if I can help them," Clara said to mask her fears.

"I could show you the building we're using for a hospital," Peter offered. "Then you can decide if you want to help."

"All right, I should be free this afternoon," Clara replied, "but I promised to call on Mrs. Harlow this morning."

Peter agreed to come fetch her after dinner and thanked her in advance for her help; Clara felt a sudden fondness for this young man who seemed so bright and capable. She did not believe even typhoid could lessen his liveliness.

After Peter rushed off, Clara helped Mrs. Wheelock wash up the breakfast dishes. She also inquired more into Peter's history.

"Oh, Peter is quite an adventurer," replied the landlady. "He's been all over the Great Lakes working on boats, doing various types of work."

"How old is he?" asked Clara.

"Only eighteen," said Mrs. Wheelock, "but he's already an old timer in terms of knowing this country. His family is from New York, but when he was nine, they moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Then when he was fifteen, he basically ran away from home and went to Mackinac Island; ever since, he's been exploring the Great Lakes and working at whatever he can find. Last spring, Mr. Graveraet hired him to help with the iron company, and he's been living here since."

“What an adventurer,” Clara said. Even Gerald’s courage in coming to this region seemed small beside a fifteen year old boy traveling all over these dangerous lands.

Once the breakfast dishes were finished, Mrs. Wheelock went to start the laundry before she needed to prepare lunch. Clara decided to act on her promise to visit the Harlows. Mrs. Wheelock pointed the way to their dilapidated hut; then Clara started down the path through the little settlement. Along the way, she glanced at the tall, unfamiliar trees that surrounded the few scattered buildings. She had never before seen so many trees stretching for so many miles. She wondered what ferocious beasts might lurk in those woods. Even in the forests of Massachusetts, it would only be a mile or two until a person saw a house or farm, but here one could walk for days without seeing another human being. Worse, a bear might be encountered. Frightened by the thought, Clara scurried to the Harlows’ hut, wishing someone were in sight in case of danger.

She found Mrs. Harlow and her mother, Mrs. Bacon, occupied with sorting the new supplies Mr. Harlow had brought from Sault Sainte Marie. After introductions, Clara’s first remark was about how nervous she felt to be outside alone, but Mrs. Bacon assured her she was perfectly safe. “No one will harass you here, and we aren’t established enough to worry about such social proprieties as a woman walking without her husband. You’re as safe here as on the streets of Boston.”

“But are there any Indians nearby?” Clara asked.

“Yes, but the Chippewa are perfectly friendly,” Mrs. Harlow added. “They’ve been very kind to us since we arrived a few weeks ago.”

“Olive, tell her about your first meeting with a Chippewa,” laughed Mrs. Bacon.

“Oh,” Olive laughed. “My first morning here, I was determined to see everything I possibly could about my new home. I stepped out my front door and practically the first thing I saw was a wigwam. I’d never seen one before, and I was just so curious it never suggested itself to my brain that it might be someone’s home. So I went over and opened up the blanket door, and to my amazement saw two squaws. At first I was surprised, and a little frightened, but they smiled and giggled, and then I giggled back and retreated.”

“I would have been terrified!” Clara gasped. “You’re lucky they weren’t male Indians.”

“Oh, the male Indians are just as kind as the women,” replied Mrs. Harlow. “They’ve already assisted us a great deal. Chief Marji Gesick has been very kind

by stopping to inquire how we are all coming along, and Charley Kawbawgam has an Indian village not far away on the Carp River. He's been showing the men the best hunting and fishing grounds, and some white men are even staying in his lodge house. Granted, we've only been here about a month, but so far, there's been no need to worry, and our hearts are strong. Now that my husband has brought us some more supplies, we should have little trouble getting by for several months. I don't think it's going to be easy, but I feel this little settlement will grow and prosper faster than one might suspect."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bacon, "the men had the dock built in just three days, and the sawmill and forge should be finished before winter arrives. It may not be until next year that we really become a businesslike town, but it will happen soon enough."

Clara smiled, but she was presently more concerned about the settlement's safety than its prosperity.

"I can't believe how this country is changing," added Mrs. Bacon. "I was born just about the time President Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase, and since then the country has more than doubled in size. When I was a child, no one ever would have imagined Michigan becoming a state, and here it's already been one for a dozen years. Just imagine, Mrs. Henning, how much this town will have grown by the time you're my age."

"Yes," said Clara, "but I'm afraid it will be a lot of work along the way."

"Hard work is what we're put on this earth for," replied Mrs. Bacon. "Besides, we have it easier now than any of our forefathers ever did, and after how they struggled to make this nation what it is today, we have to carry on the tradition of that hard work."

Clara recalled her grandmother uttering similar sentiments. She thought again of her ancestress, Anne Bradstreet, trembling upon arrival in the New World, only to become a famous poetess and one of the first ladies of the land, daughter, wife, and sister to colonial governors. Clara wondered whether someday she might equally be remembered as a pioneer of this rugged place. If the iron ore recently discovered made them all as rich as predicted, and Worcester grew as large as Boston, she might delight her mother by becoming a leader of Worcester society.

But Clara had not come to gain wealth or social position. She reminded herself she had come to support her husband, and to prove she had the courage to surmount challenges rather than settle for the dull social rituals of Boston. For the first time, she felt excited to be living along the shores of Lake Superior. Her travel fatigue was lifting, and she felt anxious to see the rest of

her new home, despite what dangers might exist in the forests. So Mrs. Harlow and Mrs. Bacon could return to their work, she soon excused herself.

“I think I’ll go for a walk along the lake before Gerald returns at noon.”

“Go ahead,” said Mrs. Harlow. “You might as well enjoy your first day here.”

“Yes, I told young Mr. White I would go to the hospital this afternoon to help.”

Mrs. Bacon and Mrs. Harlow exchanged approving glances. Clara’s heart glowed inside her—she had been afraid people would think her some frail young miss from high society, but already she felt she was proving herself.

As she stepped out of the wooden hut, she scanned the other log cabins under construction. A few wigwams and a lodge house were in the distance; she wondered whether Indians resided in them or had white men taken possession. Scarcely enough buildings existed to qualify as a village. She looked down to the lake where the lone dock stood. The schooner had already disappeared from sight, leaving no chance to escape. Lake Superior stood before her—the only source of communication with the outside world—so large she could not see Canada across it. How long before another ship would come, before ships would come regularly? It might be years before there was a railroad or even paved streets, before there would even be stores in which to buy trinkets, or cloth, or even food. There wasn’t even a butcher—Gerald would have to hunt for their meat, and they would have to plant their own vegetables. She wondered how much land they would have to plant to feed themselves. Mr. Harlow had told Gerald sixty-three acres had been purchased for the village to expand upon, but only a few acres were now cleared. She could not imagine the settlement ever growing enough to cover that much land. The trees would only encroach back in. All around her were towering pines, oaks, and maples. So many trees—a giant unexplored forest all around, full of mystery, perhaps horror.

“Clara!”

She turned to see Gerald walking toward her with Mr. Harlow. He was beaming.

“I’ve found the perfect place for our house. A few of the other men have agreed to help build it, and when they heard I had a wife, they said we could raise our roof first, and then I can help them later. We should have our own shelter within the week.”

“That’s good,” Clara smiled. “Then I’ll have a place to put my china.”

“More than that,” said Gerald, “we’ll have a home, and I’ll fill it with home-made furniture. Isn’t it exciting, Clara? It’s a whole new world for us.”

She hesitated to reply, but Gerald's enthusiasm won her over; he was so free from self-doubt, so charismatically able to make others believe in him; she believed in him. His confidence was what made him most attractive to her. If they did not survive here, it would not be through the fault of this brave man she loved.

Clara took his hand.

"It's a fine land, Gerald. I'm sure we'll be happy here."

Mr. Harlow smiled in recognition of the same courage his own wife possessed. Maple leaves rustled in the breeze, as if confirming Clara's words. Gerald once more felt he had made the right choice in his bride, in this brave, beautiful young woman.



During lunch at the boarding house, Clara introduced her husband to Peter and mentioned she would be visiting the hospital that afternoon. Gerald was displeased by this news, thinking his kindhearted wife too delicate to expose herself to sickness. After all, she had been raised in the lap of luxury, had never known any hardship; while many hard days were before them, he wished to shelter and protect her whenever possible.

"I don't think you should go, Clara dear," he said.

"Gerald, why not?"

"I don't want you to overstrain yourself. We've had a long journey here, and I think you should rest this afternoon. You'll need your strength for the work ahead."

If she were in Boston, Clara would have deferred to her husband's wishes, but here she could not succumb to such social proprieties. She would not sit back while others labored, and Gerald had to realize that from the start. If they were to survive here, she had to familiarize herself immediately with all the community's needs.

"Dear, you're not resting today," she replied. "Besides, it can't hurt me simply to visit the hospital and meet some of the other settlers."

"I'm just afraid that if you wear yourself out, you'll be susceptible to disease," he replied.

"Oh, Gerald," Clara dismissed his worries. "Mr. White says the epidemic is over and the patients are no longer contagious. I'll be fine. I promise I won't stay long."



When Gerald began to curl his lip in surprise at his wife's dissension, Peter boldly entered the marital dispute.

"I assure you it's perfectly safe, Mr. Henning. I've been nursing the sick for several days without becoming ill; nor have I passed the sickness on to anyone here."

"That's true," said Mrs. Wheelock.

"I promise I'll only stay a short while, Gerald," Clara continued. "Then I'll come home and rest before helping Mrs. Wheelock with supper."

Gerald felt he should object again. They were paying Mrs. Wheelock for room and board, so why should his wife help her like a common maid? Yet he was proud of Clara's enthusiastic spirit. She was obviously determined to have her own way; in one sentence, she had appeased him by promising to rest, yet added to her demand to visit the hospital by offering to help Mrs. Wheelock. Gerald wished his mother-in-law could see Clara visiting a hospital and working in a boarding house; the droll thought won Gerald over.

Mr. Harlow now entered the boarding house; he had promised to spend that afternoon helping Gerald find lumber for the Hennings' new home.

"I'll be with you in just a moment, Mr. Harlow," Gerald promised, swallowing the last of his coffee and rising from the table. "Very well, dear. You go ahead, but don't tire yourself out. I'll see you this evening. Take good care of her, Mr. White."

Realizing her victory, Clara flashed Gerald a radiant smile. She was determined to be her husband's partner in their marriage, not to be subservient to him, but neither would she rule over her husband as her mother ruled her father. As for Gerald, he admired his wife all the more in her beautiful glow of triumph. Were it not improper before all the others, he would have kissed her right then. Instead, he wished his table companions a pleasant afternoon and departed.

"Are you ready to go, Mrs. Henning?" Peter asked. Clara fetched her bonnet, then joined him outside.

Ten minutes later, she found herself entering the little building that had been rapidly constructed to serve as a hospital when the typhoid crisis broke. She was surprised to think anyone could get well here when the building looked as if it would not stand for long; she could imagine winter's freezing gusts creeping through cracks in the walls; she hoped all the patients would be long recovered before that fierce season arrived.

"I need to help bathe a couple of the patients," Peter said as they entered. "I've been bathing them in cold water. I didn't know what else to do, and Dr.

Rogers was too ill to instruct me, but he says I've helped save many lives by doing so. Only a few are still ill, but they've entered the recovery stage. Still, I wouldn't advise you to follow me when I visit a couple of them."

"Oh," said Clara, disappointed to be separated from her guide, although she understood he had work to do.

"Let me introduce you to that couple over there," Peter offered, pointing toward a woman sitting beside her husband's bedside. "Many of the patients are German immigrants, and they only speak broken English, but this couple, the Bergmanns, speak English fairly well because the wife is Irish. Mrs. Bergmann is about our age, so perhaps you ladies will find something in common."

Clara recalled her mother's many complaints about the horrid, dirty Irish who had flooded into Boston, taking over the city, and crowding its streets. They were Catholics and uneducated, and Clara's mother thought them little better than the dirt they used to grow their potatoes. But Clara reminded herself that in this little settlement, if everyone were to survive, there could be no social class distinctions. "It's thoughtful of you, Peter, to think I might want a female friend my own age."

"Come then; I'll introduce you," he said, leading her across the room.

Mr. Bergmann was sitting up in bed, while his wife sat beside him, attempting to feed him some broth. Upon seeing Peter, both husband and wife broke into smiles.

"Mr. and Mrs. Bergmann, allow me to introduce Mrs. Gerald Henning. Mrs. Henning and her husband just arrived last night with Mr. Harlow."

Mrs. Bergmann extended her hand to Clara, while her husband nodded a polite welcome, his arms still too weak to be lifted.

"Hello," said Mrs. Bergmann, "please call me Molly. It's nice to see another woman brave enough to come here."

"I'm Clara. Actually, I'm surprised by how many women have come here," Clara replied, shaking Molly's hand.

Clara knew her mother would disapprove of her adopting a first name basis with a foreigner, but Clara felt independence surging in her, a desire to rebel against her mother and all the old constricting social rituals she had learned. Each hour, she reaffirmed that she had made the right decision to travel to this rugged, distant land.

"I think you women stronger than we menfolk," Mr. Bergmann remarked. Clara noted his English was better than she had expected.

"I understand you are from Germany, Mr. Bergmann?"

“Saxony,” he corrected. “I come to America last year to work. My country have bad political problems, so I no stay there. Safer here, and here better chance to make money. I meet my pretty wife when I get here, so am glad I come.”

“Did you meet here in Worcester?” asked Clara.

“Oh no,” laughed Molly, “but we’re still newlyweds. Fritz and I met in Boston last Christmas, and then we got married in March when he decided to go to Milwaukee where he had some German cousins. My family is from Ireland. We came to this country a few years ago because of the potato famine there.”

“Then you are still newlyweds,” said Clara. “I’m one myself. My husband and I were just married in July before we began the journey here. And we’re both from Boston.”

“We’ll have to help each other raise new families in this wilderness land,” Molly smiled.

“Yes,” Clara replied. With so many friendly, kind people, Worcester would be a good place to raise her and Gerald’s children.

“But you must miss Boston?” said Molly.

The two women discussed familiar places in Boston, but in the end, Clara confessed she did not miss her native city. Then the three of them discussed their journeys to this new land. Clara suggested the journey to Worcester from Boston, while difficult, must have been nothing compared to Molly’s journey a few years earlier from Ireland to America. Molly agreed but appeared reluctant to speak of Ireland. “I try not to think about that,” she said. “The future is the only thing worth thinking about.” Fritz drifted to sleep during the conversation, but the women continued to chat, each relieved to find someone of her own age and gender with whom to discuss her dreams and anxieties about this new land. After an hour, when Peter came to fetch her, Clara promised Molly she would visit again the next day. Already she felt they were friends.



For the next several days, Gerald labored to build the small cabin that would serve as his and Clara’s home during their first Upper Michigan winter. The Hennings had been warned the winters here would be cold and severe, if not worse than those in New England; Clara shuddered to think of such a winter without all the comforts of Boston, but Gerald told her they would not lack for heat when surrounded by such thick forests of birch, pine, oak and maple to use for firewood. Gerald was fortunate to receive help from the other men in

building his cabin, and he helped them finish their shelters before the first winter snow flew. Meanwhile, Clara continued to help Mrs. Wheelock prepare meals, to visit the Harlows and Bergmanns, and to assist at the hospital. Mr. Harlow occupied himself in supervising the construction of a sawmill and forge, as well as building a larger home for his family; this house would include a large single room in which the community could hold church and village meetings. By the second week, Clara had met everyone in the little village of Worcester and even memorized their names. She enjoyed the closeness of the friendly settlers, so different from the vacant, unfamiliar faces of the thousands she had constantly seen on the streets of Boston. Realizing her own integral role in the community gave her a sense of belonging and importance she had never felt before. The pioneer spirit of these brave settlers remained cheerful as they watched autumn come with its burst of magnificent colors; such beauty was a reminder of winter's approach, but it also confirmed what a fine land they had chosen.

By mid-September, the Hennings' cabin was finished. Clara could scarcely restrain her pleasure at finally being mistress of her own home. It was a small house—only two rooms that could have fit inside her mother's Boston parlor—but it was as fine a house as any in the village. On a brilliant fall morning, with sunshine breaking through the trees and onto the new kitchen floor, Gerald brought Clara to her new home and insisted on carrying her over the threshold. Once through the door and then back on her feet, Clara took to admiring her husband's workmanship in every detail from the wooden door to the window frames. Then unexpectedly, she was overcome by queasiness and bolted back outside.

Gerald ran after her. He found her behind the house, bent over and making unladylike noises.

"Clara, what's wrong? Are you ill?" Instantly, he blamed himself. How could he have consented to let Clara nurse at the hospital? For that matter, how could he have brought her to this wilderness land? And this house—why it was nothing but a shack! He could not expect his precious wife to survive in this savage place. He did not even deserve her when he had been so thoughtless regarding her welfare. "Clara, what's wrong? Please, answer me," he begged.

He was close to tears by the time she lifted her head and wiped her beautiful lips with her handkerchief. "Clara, is it—the typhoid?"

"No, Gerald," she smiled, despite her queasiness. "I think you're going to be a father."