

present condition of the river that they cannot be shipped to this or any other southern market. We were credibly informed last week that wheat was offering in the Rock river country at 37½ cents per hundred and flour was selling at from \$10 to \$12 per barrel. \* \* \* The failure to get the lead to market is also a serious inconvenience to the merchants of this place, as in turn they are compelled to wait for their debts until it can be forwarded, and in the meantime are unable to meet their eastern engagements in the manner they had expected. \* \* \* The continuous low stage of water in all the upper streams has also detained a large portion of the country dealers, and the resources from this direction have not been near realized. Freights from the south are abundant, and a large drain is constantly made to meet the bills from that quarter, while the goods, in many cases, have to be stored to await the rise."

Turning our attention more particularly to Wisconsin, we see by the census of 1840 that there were then 49 smelting houses employing a capital of \$664,600 and yielding annually 15,129,350 pounds of lead, worth about \$500,000. Most of this went to Galena.<sup>1</sup> One out of every 38 of the population of the state was engaged in mining, while the average proportion for the rest of the United States was 1 to 1,122. The extent of this industry, and the unsatisfactory conditions attending the shipment by the Mississippi route, combined with the desire of merchants for a more direct communication with Eastern markets, gradually turned a considerable portion of the lead trade into the lake route through Milwaukee. The process was much facilitated by the necessity which, as early as 1831, compelled the Helena shot-tower owners to ship their product to the East. Following their example, the lead-smelters began sending an increasing proportion of their product, year by year, to the lake ports. It has already been pointed out that this had begun as early as 1836 and 1838.

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<sup>1</sup> Josiah Bond, "Wisconsin and its Resources," in *Hunt's Merch. Mag.*, x., pp. 552, 553.