



The Great Glacier

CHAPTER I

AN AGE OF ICE

A great frozen stillness pervades the land, high towering cliffs of blue-green ice shimmer in the light. The animals had long since moved south inexorably forced ahead of the great moving sheets of grinding, scouring ice, some two miles thick which bestrode the land.

A shattering, splintering explosion, like the sudden crack of lightning shatters the silence as a great chunk of the glaciers face breaks away and slides with a thundering rumble and splash into the ever increasing lakes of fresh melt water at its base.

Water flies upward in tremendous spouts of white foam driven higher and higher by the uncounted tons of ice rolling, and writhing within its depths. The mists of the splash are broken into shimmering rainbows of flashing colors.

Gradually the turbulence settles, as the newly born Iceberg and the water reach equilibrium silence returns, until the next great cataclysm.

Such was the scene some 20,000 years ago as the last great glacial age reached its end and slowly receded to the north from

whence it had come. Left behind by the glacial action were the Great Lakes basins. The Mississippi and Missouri drainage systems and the hundreds of smaller river systems of which the White River is one.

The Montague Area at that time was covered by 20 feet of glacial melt water. The fluctuating depths of this water as it gradually settled to its present levels is what formed White Lake.

The period from the end of the Ice Age until our first recorded history of the Western Michigan Area remains locked in the shadows of the past.

It must have been a period of gradual building of fertility in the soils. A slow return of vegetation nurtured by rains and sun until finally the stately pine forests covered the entire area, separated by sparkling clear streams and rivers and dotted here and there with beautiful lakes.