



Confluence

Where Past Meets Present

Volume 28 Issue 3

BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May/June, 2021

Photo Above
**Hanchett Bartlett Homestead
FRIENDSHIP GARDEN**

Dedicated in honor of pioneer women who carried seeds and cuttings when moving to new territories. Neighbors were greeted with these gifts and new gardens were established.

The garden was made possible by the generosity and hard work of Jeune Nelson and the Beloit Garden Lovers Club. Dedicated May 19, 2001

In this Issue

Looking Back.....	2
Slaymaker Farm History.....	3
An Amazing Beloit.....	4-5
New to the Collection.....	6
From the Collection.....	7
Rindfleisch Flowers.....	8
BHS Happenings.....	9
Trivia Teaser.....	10

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CAR & MECHANIC SHOW

SUNDAY, JUNE 13TH

9:00 am - 6:00 pm

845 Hackett St. Beloit WI

Judging results announced at 3:30 pm

Beloit Historical Society is sponsoring this outdoor fundraising event featuring cars from various decades, engines, display machinery, engineering designs and prototypes. The Beloit Daily News motorized Go-Kart from the Grand Prix races held in downtown Beloit in the 1990s will also be on display. *See more details on page 8.*

Interested in registering a car or piece of machinery for display?

Go to beloithistoricalsociety.com or call 608-365-7835

Ticket pre-sales will begin April 12th on our website



Grand Prix Race in downtown Beloit 1993





In the end, our society will be defined not only by what we create,
but by what we refuse to destroy.
- John Sawhill



John C. Sawhill was president and CEO of The Nature Conservancy and the 12th President of New York University. He is the Former Administrator of the Federal Energy Administration.

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Originally known as the Slaymaker Farm it was purchased by Emanuel Reigart in 1850 for his daughter who was married to Samuel Slaymaker, a farmer, bank vice president and chairman of the Town of Turtle. In 1857 the farmhouse was built. It was later owned by Sam Wallace, George Macklem, H.F. Halvorsen and Richard McNall. (Sam Wallace is the great grandfather to our current BHS member and past president Nancy Wallace).



In the late 1970s, Newell Company (later Newell-Rubbermaid) first rented the building for offices and later purchased it in 1982. They built a one million dollar addition on to the building (c.2000). Newell-Rubbermaid put the property up for sale in 2002.



Kerry Americas bought the property in 2002 for \$375,000 and moved in corporate offices including executives, president and staff, mergers and acquisitions, legal, treasury, taxes and some human resources. Many touches of the farm's history remain, including the row of maple trees planted by Slaymaker, a fireplace and stair banister. The new name was Kerry Ingredients North American Headquarters.



In 2009 Kerry started adding some "outbuildings" to the farm. The new 260,000 square foot innovation and commercial centre and in 2012 added another 30,000 Cell Science laboratory. The original farmhouse can just be seen at the lower left. The original barn and one other outbuilding remain on the property.

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Beloit Historical Society, Beloit, WI

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An Amazing Beloit



Many of us who have lived in Beloit for some time know that Roy Chapman Andrews was born here. We also most likely know that he was a great explorer and that the Indiana Jones movies were based on his life and his expeditions into the Gobi Desert.

The article by Carol Mankiewicz in the last *Confluence* (March/April, 2021) about his close brush with death on the Rock River north of Beloit, may have piqued your interest a little. However, unless you have done additional research, you have no idea what an amazing Beloit he was. He went to Beloit public schools and Beloit College.

The education he received in our city shaped him and gave him the tools he needed for his great success.



Did you know.....

◆ He grew up in a house at 419 St. Lawrence Ave. He disliked being inside; so he spent many hours exploring the prairies, creeks and river. *"I always intended to be an explorer, to work in a natural history museum and to live out of doors. Actually, I never had any choice of a profession. I wanted to be an explorer and naturalist so passionately that anything else as a life work just never entered my mind."*

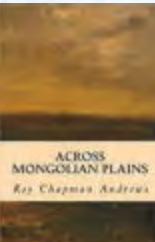


◆ He taught himself how to mount animals and deer heads from the book *Taxidermy and Home Decoration*. His reputation spread as the only taxidermist within 50 miles. He made a lot of money during hunting season which helped pay for college. He established a natural history museum of sorts filled with stuffed birds and other collections in the barn behind the family home. Some of his taxidermy work was displayed on the walls of **Moran's Saloon** (312 State St. – listed on National Register of Historic Places in 1983).



◆ His near death experience on the Rock River covered in our last issue, caused him to lose 40 pounds and twitch and shake painfully with any external excitement. He suffered mild effects from this his entire life.

◆ He had a good talk with himself to get his life on track. *"Graduation from college was a sad time for me. Suddenly I realized I had wasted time and opportunities; that although I was receiving a diploma, it really had not been earned."* After the morning graduation ceremonies, *"I went into the woods alone, and stayed for hours, mostly sitting on the river bank. Mentally, I took myself apart and examined the pieces. I didn't like what I saw. On that June afternoon I changed from an irresponsible boy to a man just as though one suit of clothes had been taken off and another put on."*



◆ There were no job openings at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City when he applied. He volunteered to clean the floors just so he could be in the same rooms where great scientists had worked.



◆ After working at the museum doing taxidermy for displays, he was offered his first expedition to study whales off of Vancouver Island and southeastern Alaska. *"What I knew about whales was less than nothing. I had never met a whale in Wisconsin's Rock River! By that time however, I had learned to keep my mouth shut and my eyes and ears open. No one could know how ignorant I was if I didn't talk."*



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- ◆ He traveled around the world on many expeditions. The most famous one was finding the first dinosaur eggs and remains of the first mammal in Asia.
- ◆ He had to raise the majority of the funds for his expeditions himself - a daunting task. One of the expeditions was estimated to cost \$250,000 dollars which would be over \$3 million today.
- ◆ He was married twice. His first wife worked for the museum as a photographer and accompanied him on expeditions. They had two sons but were later divorced.
- ◆ He authored **22 books**, some of them for children.
- ◆ He admitted to a weakness around drugs, which he discovered on one of his trips to central Asia. He knew he had to keep a distance from them or put his career in jeopardy. Alcohol did not create the same problem for him.
- ◆ On one of his expeditions, he and his fellow teammates killed 47 poisonous pit vipers which invaded their tents one night in an attempt to get warm.
- ◆ His autobiography *Under a Lucky Star*, was named so because of the number of times he encountered near death experiences in his life. The editors of *Discover* magazine have included this book in its list of the **25 most outstanding science books ever written**.
- ◆ He included among his friends and acquaintances: Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Noel Coward, John Barrymore, Theodore Roosevelt, Herbert Hoover, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Lowell Thomas and others. **He came as close to superstar status as any explorer of the 20th century.**
- ◆ One has to marvel at the reasons he was so successful. He had an unbelievable tool chest of necessary skills. He was: 1) curious at his core, 2) determined and energetic, 3) possessed with an enormous bank of knowledge, 4) skilled at shooting, riding and taxidermy, 5) personable, 6) good at raising money, 7) an inspiring public speaker and 8) a prolific writer who added a great deal to our body of scientific knowledge.
- ◆ He was buried in the family plot at Oakwood Cemetery in Beloit in 1960.

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Beloit Historical Society, Beloit, WI

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New to the Collection

The photograph of the **Civil War Monument** at Oakwood Cemetery on the back page of the previous issue of *Confluence*, prompted our member **Larry Hansen** to make a donation to the Beloit Historical Society. Larry's great uncle Edward Hansen, was a participant in the ceremony and an active member of the group responsible for making the monument possible. The donation included a postcard of the monument, programs from the dedication in 1905, a Souvenir Cards booklet of images taken during the 1905 ceremony and an 82 page book "Dedication Soldiers' Monument Memorial Day 1905 Beloit, Wis." These items written by the organizers and pictures taken the day of the event provide first hand accounts of the planning and fundraising needed to make the monument a reality. Fundraising included the sale of bronze souvenir dollars, badges purchased by school children, donations from the G.A.R., the D.A.R., Company L veterans and citizens. A total of \$4242.00 was raised of which \$4115.00 was used to pay for the monument.



Images from
the Souvenir
Cards
booklet



Hon Edward F. Hansen
Sec. / Treas. Beloit Savings Bank
Secretary of Citizens' Monument Ass.



An example of a souvenir
sold to raise money for the
monument, from the BHS
collections.

Larry Hansen donated many other items to Beloit Historical Society. We will attempt to feature many of them in future issues of *Confluence*.

We sincerely thank Larry for letting us
**"Share Beloit's History to Enhance
Community Pride!"**

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A model airplane club was organized in Beloit in 1928 with 13 founding airplane enthusiasts (hence the club name of Hangar "13"). The club met twice a month at the YMCA to build model airplanes, paying 25¢ to join the club and 10¢ per meeting for dues. The club purchased building materials in bulk to conserve limited resources. Balsa, ambroid cement, banana oil, tissue, silk, rubber, music wire and airplane dope was shared among the members for regular projects. If large amounts of material were needed for a special project, the club provided the materials at cost.



A replica of the 1936-1937 club project built by 27 of the members was donated to the Beloit Historical Society in 2002.

By 1940, the club membership numbered 40 with a waiting list of applicants to join. Membership rose to 125 in the late 70s. The age of the members ranged from 11 to 24 with the older more experienced members helping the younger who started with simple designs. About 30 attended the weekly Wednesday meetings to build planes and study aerodynamics. The theory of flight with a model plane is the same as with a full-size airplane and each member worked to understand the technical details of flight in order to make their model fly. Many members went on to careers in aerodynamics and engineering. One became an editor for *Popular Science Magazine*.

Members competed against each other and members of other clubs locally and nationally on the amount of time a plane stayed in the air. Over time, the name Hangar "13" changed and is now known as the **Rock River Aero Modelers Society**, which continues the proud tradition of building model airplanes and flying them in competitions. Their headquarters is on County Road J and current membership stands at 40+.

Sources:

- Beloit Daily News May 6, 1940
- Beloit Historical Society archives



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Rindfleisch Flowers

Anyone who has lived in Beloit for the past (almost) 125 years, is familiar with one of the city's oldest businesses, **Rindfleisch Flowers**. It was started in 1888 by John and Anna Hornke Rindfleisch, who came to Beloit from Milwaukee. It began as a truck farm with vegetable gardens at a Shirland Ave. location. The couple moved the operations to a green house next to their home at the end of Fourth St. (now Jacobson Field north of the high school). They expanded the green houses for the purpose of growing out-of-season produce. They were able to grow lettuce, radishes, tomatoes, parsley etc. which were considered quite a delicacy, especially during the winter months. Later, more houses were added and developed into the florist industry exclusively.

They sold their flowers out of a two - story building located at 512 E. Grand. It was torn down to make way for the current, larger store built in 1926. This building was added to the **National Register of Historic Places on January 7, 1983**, and the business continues to operate under the same name.



Beautiful original tiling work remains in the interior



CAR & MECHANIC SHOW

SUNDAY, JUNE 13TH

9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Beloit Historical Society is hosting a Car and Mechanic Show on Sunday June 13th from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM at 845 Hackett St. Beloit, WI. This outdoor fundraiser event features cars from various decades, engines, display machinery, engineering designs and prototypes. The BHS is showcasing the Beloit Daily News motorized Go-kart that raced through downtown Beloit during the Grand Prix.

You can be a part of the show by registering your car or piece of machinery for display. Fill out the registration form on our website at beloithistoricalsociety.com or call the office at 608-365-7835 to request a paper form. Registration deadline is June 1st. Fee for registration is \$45.00.

Help support BHS by visiting the show!

Food Truck options will be available for lunch. Vote for your favorite car or display to win the crowd choice award! Pre-sale tickets to view the show are available on our website at beloithistoricalsociety.com, or call the at 608-365-7835 to request an alternate method of ticket sales. Tickets will also be sold at the event. Adults: \$5.00, Kids: \$2.00, FREE admission with a Beloit Historical Society membership card.

Right: The automobile speedometer invented by Beloit's own A.P. Warner.



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We hope to see you there!

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Message from Donna....

Spring has arrived and staff is busy planning and looking forward to our upcoming events. The Annual Meeting on May 27 features Dan Schoof of Beloit College sharing aspects of the Powerhouse restoration. This is an excellent example of adaptive use of an historic building.

The warmer weather has turned our thoughts to spending time outdoors. I invite you to stop by our booth at the Downtown **Beloit Farmers Market** on **Saturday May 29 and July 10th**.

Sunday, **June 13**, is the **Car and Mechanic Show** on the Lincoln Center grounds. Join us and explore the different car models that have been seen on Beloit streets over the years, including a very small one that once raced through downtown.

A **thrift sale fundraiser** will fill the Lincoln Center grounds **Friday and Saturday July 23-24**. We are now accepting gently used items that need a new home. Contact us at (608) 365-7835 or email info@beloithistoricalsociety.com to make arrangements to drop off items. Join us at the sale to find great deals and support the society.

September 10 -12 will be a fun-filled **Heritage Days** weekend and our planned reopening of the Lincoln Center building. In the meantime, visits to BHS are by appointment. Details of our activities can be found on our website, <http://beloithistoricalsociety.com>.

This summer three student interns will be working alongside Julia Schoenthal and myself. Julia Hwang, of Beloit College, Huixin (Lucy) Li, also a Beloit College student, will be focusing on collection management. Nicole Yaccarino, of Carthage College, is our Exhibit Development intern. The three will work as a team, remotely and in-person, to provide new exhibits.

We are anticipating an exciting summer and invite you to join us!

Donna Langford



Virtual Annual Meeting May 27, 6:00 p.m.

Speaker: Dan Schoof

"So, I hear you have a fixer-upper on the river....."

Now that the Beloit College Powerhouse has gone from vision to reality, how did this complex project happen? Join Beloit College Chief of Staff & Secretary of the College, Dan Schoof as he gives a behind-the-scenes look at the project. Dan will spend time on the design, funding, national landmark status, and historic tax credit process.



The Annual Meeting, **held virtually this year**, focuses on community engagement with a presentation of the Beloit Historical Society's new strategic plan and exciting plans for reopening on September 10. **Call (608) 365-7835 or email info@beloithistoricalsociety.com to join us virtually.**



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TRIVIA TEASER

Question: What is the story of the famous one thousand dollar bill?

Answer: The first bank in Beloit was opened by L.C. Hyde in 1855. In 1879, the L.C. Hyde & Brittan Bank was located on the NE corner of State and Grand. Around that same time H.W. Taylor organized the Citizens National Bank in the Zille block on State St. A bookkeeper at the Citizens Bank shared the story that at the close of each day they would list the checks drawn on the Hyde & Brittan Bank and the other bank would do the same. The difference would be paid in currency. Sometimes the balance would be one way and sometimes the other. If the balance due to Citizens happened to be a considerable amount, Mr. Hyde would stick in a \$1,000 bill much to the annoyance and chagrin of Mr. Taylor. A thousand dollar bill is not of much use in a bank's current funds to pay ordinary daily checks, so Mr. Hyde liked to annoy his competitor. However, when the balance was the other way, back would go the \$1,000 bill from Mr. Taylor to Mr. Hyde's bank. They bandied the famous thousand dollar bill back and forth until they each became completely fed up with the irritation and halted the childish game.

"EVERY TOWN HAS TO HAVE A PLACE TO KEEP ITS HISTORY, OTHERWISE IT WILL BE LOST"

John Patrick

We try to use John Patrick's saying in most of our issues of *Confluence* because it gets to the core of why it is so important for Beloit Historical Society to exist.

John grew up in Beloit and is still very active in keeping the history of our area alive. He is always happy to share his memories of growing up here with the rest of us. He was reminiscing about 3 blocks of State St. and the businesses that existed there when he was younger. He remembered that those 3 blocks had more than a dozen taverns!



Here is one of John's memories on a different topic:

"I am a fan of the TV show Diners, Drive-Ins & Dives. The best diner I have ever been in was the H&D Café on State Street. George and Imogene Demus served Delicious home cooked food. A typical lunch special might be roast pork and dressing served with mashed potatoes, home made bread and vegetable, topped off with a piece of home made pie or hot bread pudding with cream. There were other places I have forgotten. Somehow I tend to remember the eating places quite vividly. There is one thing for sure: No matter whether it was State St. or any other downtown street, Beloit was a busy, vibrant and happy town. That I remember well!"



**Susan Alexander/Rob Butz
John Blakely
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Your membership benefits include:

1. Six issues of *Confluence*, the BHS newsletter
2. Free access to the Luebke Memorial Library
3. Free admission to the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead
4. Discounts on BHS programs and services
5. Affiliate Membership in the Wisconsin State Historical Society
6. Voting privileges at the Annual Meeting
7. Opportunities to get involved as a volunteer or board member



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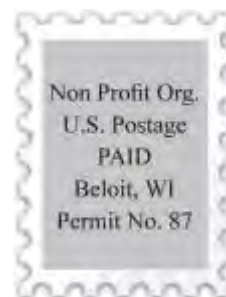


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Confluence Newsletter

*Sharing Beloit's History to
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More tales from Beloit's own Roy Chapman Andrews.
Beloit is extremely proud of him!
See pages 4 & 5

Beloit Historical Society Sustaining Memberships

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*** Designates new sustaining member**

Thank You!