



# Confluence

*Where Past Meets Present*

Volume 29 Issue 5

**BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Sept./Oct. 2021

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Beloit Historical Society

## GRAND RE-OPENING

**Friday, Saturday & Sunday**  
September 10, 11 & 12

Friday & Saturday 9am - 6 pm  
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845 Hackett Street, Beloit WI

*Don't miss the Opening Ceremony - Friday 9:00 am*

## Heritage Days are back!

**New Exhibits featuring....**  
**Beloit soldiers letters home during WW II**  
**Soul of the Community: Baseball in Beloit**



## Heritage Baking Contest

**Saturday, Sept. 11th**

**1:00 - 3:30 pm**

**Awards start at 3:00 pm**

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## Looking Back



**The Bartlett Museum as it appeared in 1966**

The Beloit Historical Society relocated operations from the Municipal Center on Grand Ave. to the Bartlett Museum.

In 1966 the house was honored as **Wisconsin's second historical landmark**. In 1977 the building was placed on the **National Register of Historic Places** and renamed the **Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead**. The home was restored in its period colors and contains furnishings from 1850-1885.

BHS offices and our collection of over 30,000 items, are now housed at Lincoln Center, 845 Hackett St.

James and Caroline Hanchett purchased 40 acres for a small farm on St. Lawrence Rd. from L.G. Fisher in 1857. James erected a home of locally quarried limestone and the couple planted hundreds of cherry, apple and pear trees. Unfortunately, James, who was a very active and noteworthy Beloit businessman, died of "mountain fever" \* in 1865, leaving Caroline to raise their nine children.

Twenty acres of the land and the homestead was sold by their son Charles to the Bartlett family in 1901. The Bartlett sisters Mary, Edith and Etta gave the house to the Beloit Historical Society along with 1.76 acres of land in 1962. The transaction was finalized in 1968 with the stipulation that the home be used as an historic museum.



\* *Rocky Mountain spotted fever (also known as Black Measles) was recognized in the early 1800s, and from 1890-1900 it became very common, especially in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana. It would be decades before scientists discovered the tick as the carrier of this disease.*

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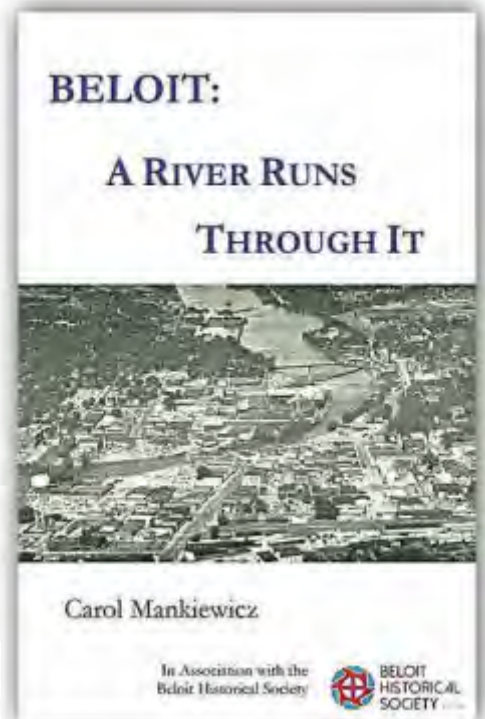
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We are excited to introduce a new book for all those who love Beloit history. Carol Mankiewicz, one of our loyal research volunteers, has undertaken the writing of ***Beloit: A River Runs Through It***. This step-by-step guide for touring our riverfront is filled with many crisp pictures and information about locations and their history. The book is thoroughly researched and written in a very friendly style. Carol's love of Beloit shows through on every page.

*"I walk or ride my bike along the path most days of the year," Carol stated, "so initially I began collecting info so I would know about the history. Then I figured other walkers, runners or bikers would be interested too. Finally, I thought about those who can't get out very easily or those who grew up here and since moved away, so it changed from a walking to an "armchair" tour as the perceived audience changed. I had always avoided researching industrial history, but as with just about everything else, the more I learned the more interesting it got. The parallels between 1880s city leaders and Beloit 2000 was particularly fascinating to me."*

Carol donated 300 copies of the book along with 100% of the profits from sales to BHS. She also arranged for us to receive an ISBN number and official copyright registration for future reprints. What a wonderfully generous contribution! **Thank you so much, Carol.**



Pages 2 & 3 of the book show the map on left published in 1887 by J.B. Dow and drawn by Charles Bergendahl with current street names in parentheses and the City of Beloit map on right with locations of figures in red for each stop.

Books sell for \$10 each at the BHS Museum Store, 845 Hackett, our website or Austin's Barber Shop, 316 State St.

The books make excellent inexpensive gifts for friends, neighbors or relatives. Is there anyone you know who cares about Beloit and would enjoy an "armchair" tour of our wonderful city?



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## The Carpenter House

The stately house sitting on the hill at 1620 Shore Drive has been one of Beloit's most talked about houses through the decades. The history of owners and uses of the home are a part of the discussion, but the rumor that it was a location for the 'underground railroad' has been the biggest driver of the conversations. This idea was started because of two tunnels, one 40' long leading from the house to the barn (northeast of the house) and a shorter one in the direction of the river. Sorry to disappoint you, but that theory has been disproved after intensive research.



Original Carpenter Home

Names of streets have changed since the house was built, but evidence indicates that Shore Drive was once part of Fifth Street. This makes tracing owners during the early years more difficult. The land changed hands many times before Mr. George B. Sanderson, an early Beloit banker, built the 26-room house in 1852. Sanderson brought a builder from Georgia who built the house and barn on the order of a 'deep south' country home. There were 16 fireplaces and priceless wood trim throughout the home. Sanderson did not live in the home very long and sold it the same year it was built to Alvin Bacon Carpenter, one of Beloit's most enterprising and public spirited citizens who lived in the home app. 37 years.

1812 in Stratford, Connecticut, the youngest of 12 children. He was a born businessman with keen instincts, energy and ethics. At age 13 he went to Troy, N.Y., where he started with a basket full of lemons which he sold door-to-door. Next, he purchased a load of clothespins which he peddled in the same way, netting a profit of \$200. He returned home where his father sold him a horse and wagon for \$100 in notes. He returned to Troy and bought a load of 'tinware and notions'. Within 6 years of peddling, he was able to pay off his debt and wound up with \$10,500 in the clear (\$250,000 today).

He came to Beloit in 1845 after doing business in Evansville, Indiana, and many other areas of the mid-west. He opened a store on South State St. and closed it one year later to start the first bank in town which continued for 3 years. In 1866 he brought a supply of clothing to Beloit and opened two stores, one for boots, shoes and groceries, the other for dry goods and clothing side-by-side in Union Hall. When fire destroyed the business in 1869, he gave up merchandising and started in the manufacture of boots and shoes by bringing Cyrus Libby, E.H. Chapman and John Foster to town (Freeman Shoes). He later sold his interest and began in realty, building the Grand Ave. Carpenter Block during 1877. He built the Grand Hotel in 1884 and was owner of several well known business properties and a number of residences in different parts of town. When the Chicago & Northwestern built their depot on Grand Ave., he built a frame hotel across the street known as The Commercial House. He served as one of the first councilmen in Beloit.

He married Almira Dutcher from Castleton, N.Y., in 1839, and the couple had 6 children (5 daughters and 1 son). During the time the Carpenter family occupied the home, Carpenter sold some of the land to the Chicago & Northwestern railroad. It is said that in those days when Mr. Carpenter took his frequent business trips to Chicago or elsewhere, the trains stopped at the **private station just east of his home!**



Alvin Bacon Carpenter

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The home was well kept with a full staff of servants. Beautiful lawns and flower gardens surrounded the home. Many social events were held in the home with carriages arriving to the brilliantly lighted dwelling and the glow of lantern-lit grounds filled with party attendees enjoying band music. In 1889 the Carpenters celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Nearly 1,000 invitations were mailed across the country. Among the invitees were many U.S. Senators and Representatives, as well as the President of the United States Benjamin Harrison and his wife Caroline. Later that same year, he built a frame house at 416 College (current site of Family Services of So. Wisconsin & No. Illinois) which served as their next home.



The home changed hands various times, first bought by a man named Preston who developed Preston Addition in the area. Then Dr. F.C. Everett had a 17 bed maternity hospital run by Dr. Gustave Newman at the location around 1928 which was at the address until sometime before 1936. The same address also recorded 'Doctor Newman's Sanitarium'. In 1947 the home underwent renovation and was opened as the Beloit Funeral Home with H.R. Kotenberg & Son, proprietors. By that time the grounds were very heavily wooded. The Kotenbergs were advised to clear the land and start with new landscaping.

Above photos show clearing of land and renovations of house for Beloit Funeral Home in 1947

In 1952 the United Steelworkers of American Local 1533, purchased the building for \$19,000 and have held ownership until the present. Another renovation of the home began that year with the removal of 7 fireplaces, all with genuine marble mantels and hearths. They were loaded on a truck and taken to the dump. The same thing happened with the walnut stairway and two brick walls that went from the basement to the ceiling on the second floor. Today only 4 of the fireplaces remain. The original cupola, formerly the study of Mr. Carpenter, is no longer part of the house. The look is utilitarian and not one of splendid elegance of its yesteryear. The change is inevitable but somehow sad. Still, the Carpenter house stands with all of its changes to look out over Rock River as it has for the past 169 years.



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BERLIN MACHINE WORKS

In the spring of 1903 Beloit, with a population of 14,000, was proportionately perhaps the best union-organized city in the state. With the help of two organizers, union membership rose from 200 in 3 unions in June 1901, to 2,000 members in 21 unions 2 years later. Not only were the building trades and industrial plants unionized, but such service trades as bartending, tailoring and retailing were well organized. Union cards were displayed in store windows. Customers bought union goods from union clerks. In accordance with their Retail Clerks' Union contract, the leading grocery stores in the city closed at 6 pm and the leading meat markets closed at 6:30 pm. The retail clerks had over 100 members.

The Iron Molders Union was especially strong. In 1902 the Molders successfully struck the Fairbanks-Morse Co. to protest what they considered the unfair discharge of a molder. After 3 weeks the company reinstated the man and the strike was called off. In March, 1903, a Molders walkout at the N.B. Gaston Sons' Scale Works forced the firm to comply with the union's demand for a minimum of \$3 a day, which was already in force at other plants.

The banner union in Beloit, however, was the International Association of Machinists, with 525 members in 1903. At its national convention in Milwaukee in May, the International voted full support, including strike benefits, to the demands that Beloit machinists had put forth earlier at the Berlin Machine Works: a nine-hour day, a minimum of 26.5 cents per hour, and no more than one apprentice for every five machinists. The company ignored the demands, and on May 9 the union men went out at the Berlin Works, closing down operations.

Week after week the company made no concessions. On July 6, the State Board of Arbitration proposed a compromise. The minimum wage demand was to be cut to 25 cents; for every nine hours of work the company would pay the equivalent of nine and a half hours; and there would be no change in the number of apprentices. The company's president replied to the compromise proposal: *Please accept my thanks for your suggestion as I appreciate your efforts. We shall have to refuse to accept the proposition, however, as the time has gone by for treating with the unions. Their treatment with us during the strike does not warrant our wishing to be connected in any way with the union or to treat with them as a body. If we ever start again, it shall be on the line of individual contract and no other.*

The strike was called off after 16 weeks. The men returned on an individual basis with no union contract. What was the source of the anti-union campaign? On June 16, 1903, the secretary of the Chicago Employers' Ass. had visited Beloit and organized an association of employers, whose chief purpose was the elimination of unions. Beloit Employers' Association became part of the rapidly growing "open shop" movement (hire workers affiliated or not with a union) which would dominate American labor relations until passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935. Beloit remained an open-shop town until the great upsurge of unionism in the mid-1930s. New unions were organized at Beloit Iron Works, Fairbanks-Morse, Freeman Shoes and many others.

## Beloit Union Membership 1903-1904

	Spring 1903	Winter 1903-4
Federal Labor Union	400	0
Machinists	525	106
Clerks	84	0
Teamsters	99	0
Garment Workers	90	0
Painters/Decorators	46	0
Electrical Workers	51	11
Shoe Workers	46	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,341</b>	<b>117</b>

Source: Robert W. Ozanne; *The Labor Movement in Wisconsin : A History* (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1984)

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## Hitching Posts and Carriage Stones

Hitching posts were common sights in Beloit prior to the advent of automobiles. Practically every home had a post in front of the home along with a carriage stone—a step to make it easier to get into a horse-driven carriage. Hitching posts came to the United States with European immigrants where they had been used as early as 1625. Some of the Beloit posts were ornamental cast iron. Some were made of wood while others were iron pipes or concrete sunk into the ground surmounted with a ball, a ring, a horse head or some other emblem to suit the whims of the horse-conscious public. Some of the citizens provided the figure of a jockey with outstretched hand for the drivers of the buggies to thread their halter line.

A city ordinance provided that all horses had to be tied to a post or hobbled with weights when left alone. All of the commercial establishments had posts in front of their buildings to accommodate the horse owners. In 1920 the rural community squawked to the city aldermen requesting additional hitching stalls in the downtown area. The local Chamber of Commerce suggested that a hitching barn be provided for the rural visitors. The various churches also had to provide hitching stalls for their members.

Early Beloiters knew the horses and rigs of the doctors of those horse-and-buggy days and could tell which doctor was visiting a home by the horse tied up to the hitching post. Dr. Clinton Helm owned one of the homeliest horses around, it was said, and the horse could never be tied to a hitching post. He would settle back on his haunches and pull until something gave way; but he would stand all day if not tied.

Even as late as 1970 there still remained several hitching posts scattered throughout the city as a reminder of travel by horse and buggy. It is hard to find hitching posts today. Most were given to the government in scrap metal drives during wartime. Some surviving posts made of stone or cast iron today sell for several thousand dollars. There are currently only a few carriage stones remaining in Beloit.



Cast Iron Hitching Post from Our Collection  
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Hitching Post at Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead



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## "THE HERMIT OF THE BIG HILLS"

When 'the big hills' were in their wild state before they were turned into a city park, a recent immigrant from Norway decided to make them his home. He built a rough cabin where he lived with no neighbors for miles around. This was in the years before the city purchased the 76 acres from Fred, William and Louis Fairbert in 1925. (An additional 10 acres was deeded to the city by the son of Beloit College Professor James J. Blaisdell later that same year). **Ole Hannevold** came with his sister and brother from Norway to find a better life in the U.S. His sister married Mr. Halvor Baukin and they became a well-known Beloit family. They had 8 children and her bother Evan, a bachelor like Ole, lived with them.

About 50 years ago, 95 year-old Clara Sanner Stahl, reminisced about the times spent with the Hermit as a child at his cabin. Her grandparents, Louis and Hamma Gensrich, were friends of the Fairbert family. Clara's mother and her brother, Mr. O.P. Hannevold (later the spelling was changed to Hannevall) came from the same part of Norway as the Hermit. The kids called him 'Uncle Ole'. Every summer all of the relatives had a picnic at the cabin. After a wagon ride that seemed to last forever, they arrived at the big hills. *"It was the highlight of our summer and eagerly waited for"* Clara recalled. Year around fun times were had at the hills also which included skiing, tobogganing, fishing, hiking, hunting and picking wild flowers. She remembered the delicious Norwegian food that would be served at their gatherings: lefsa made on a huge wood stove and smeared with sour cream, lingonberries, fatismansbakkles, crumkakker, rolls pulsa and pickled roast. She recalled that she was not at all fond of the lutefisk or romeerot.

Clara expressed regret that she did not ask more questions about 'Uncle Ole'. Why did he choose to live there all alone, when did he build the cabin, how often did he come into town to visit his sister and brother, how did he make money to cover his expenses, why did he never marry etc.? She felt certain that those questions would forever remain unanswered.

When the Hermit needed groceries, he grabbed 'a gunny sack' and hiked to Beloit along the old North Western Railroad right-of-way. His pants also were made of 'gunny sacks.' Ole was a handsome man, but he chose to live his solitary life until his death. Along with Clara, those of us interested in Beloit history wish we knew much more of the Hermit's unique story. It likely would have made good reading.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- that tightrope walkers used to stretch a rope from the Goodwin House to the opposite building and give exhibitions?
- that lightening rod salesmen came to town with 10 red wagons, installed rods supposedly for \$5 after which the buyers found they had signed notes for \$50?
- that ladies used to pin watches to their left shoulders?
- that Fred Northrop, a college student, rode a saddle horse at night to light the street gas lamps?
- that Beloiters rode tandem bikes?
- that a full course dinner could be had in the old Spanish Tavern for 55 cents?
- that every church gave an ice cream social each year?
- that all of the ice cream socials were illuminated with Chinese lanterns?
- that Bluff Street once was named "Tight Street" being only half as wide as it is at present?
- that college students cut off the tails of milk delivery horses as a fraternity prank?
- that beer was a nickel a glass and the lunch was free?



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## Message from Executive Director Donna Langford

It has been an exciting summer and as it comes to an end, we say goodbye to two of our three summer interns, **Nicole Yaccarino** and **Luci Li**. We wish them well in their future endeavors. Summer intern **Julia Hwang** will continue her internship experience at BHS through the fall semester. The team dynamic that developed between the students was wonderful to see as they coordinated collections care with exhibit development during the installation of the new exhibit in the Sports Hall of Fame.

On August 24, we are pleased to welcome **Jasmine Feng** as our fall semester intern through the Duffy program at Beloit College. We have been honored to serve as an internship host site for the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) and for Beloit College students.

We are also pleased to welcome new volunteers **Linda Smith**, **Vicki Hutchinson** and **Jim Zelligen**. One of the favorite parts of my job is working with student interns and volunteers. I am looking forward to the fall months as we begin planning for 2022.

## THRIFT SALE FUNDRAISER RESULTS

Our Thrift Sale Fundraiser to support BHS was held July 23 and 24. There was a great response from donors providing items for the sale. We raised about \$1,200, and another sale is planned in a few weeks to sell the remaining items.

Thanks so much to the committee: **Julia Shoenthal**, **Jackie Jackson**, **Ellen Joyce**, **Alexia Payton** and **Donna Langford**. Additional help was given by Rick Dexter, Tom Larsen, Nicolette Meister and our 3 summer interns.

Welcome New  
Beloit College  
Duffy Intern

## Jasmine Qlongyl

**Feng**, an international student from China, will be joining us August 24 for a fall internship through Beloit College.

*"Working with Beloit Historical Society is a valuable opportunity for me. The goal of BHS perfectly fits my own objectives in broadening and deepening my understanding of museum and historical studies and applying the knowledge and skills I have gotten. With guidance from the site partner of BHS and the professor of the Duffy program, I believe that this will be a pairing of academic study and hands-on experience, from which I will be able to immerse myself in meaningful field work and enjoy being a part of my community,"* Jasmine stated.

Welcome aboard, Jasmine. We are happy to have you join us.

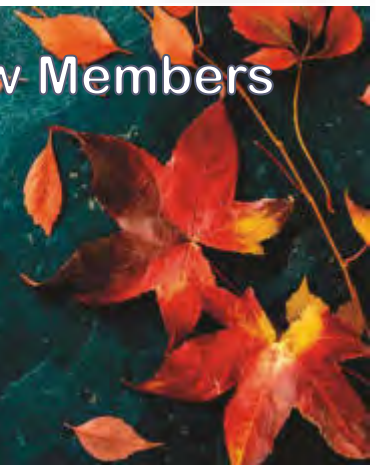


We are also very fortunate to have **Julia Hwang**, one of our summer interns, continue with us for the fall semester. Thank you, Julia.



## Welcome New Members

**Gary Christ**  
**Deb McCann**  
**Jan Ocker**  
**Nancy Ross**  
**Thomas Scott**



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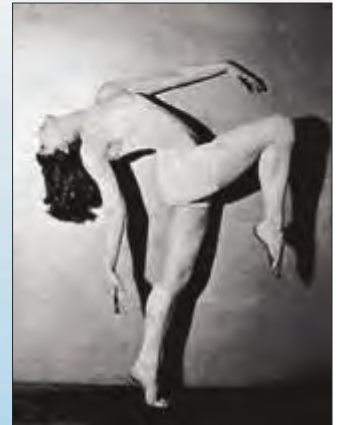




Jane Sherman in 1927 after her Denishawn Dance Company Tour to Asia

Jane Sherman, dancer and writer, was a performer who also chronicled decades of dance. She was born on June 14, 1908, in Beloit. She was the daughter of Horace Humphrey Sherman, an advertising writer, and Florentine St. Clair, an opera singer. Her dance studies began when she was 13, after the family moved to New York City. She saw a Denishawn program that inspired her to study at the New York Denishawn School. This was an eclectic company founded by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn in 1915. From it emerged modern-dance figures like Martha Graham.

Ms. Sherman went to Asia on a tour with the Denishawn company in 1925-26, when she was 17, the youngest member of the group. She recorded her impressions in her diary and in letters home. All of this material was preserved and served as the basis for *Soaring* (Wesleyan University, 1976), a vivid account of the trip that won the prestigious **de la Torre Bueno Prize** for dance writing.



Ms. Sherman performed with other companies ranging from modern dance groups, the **Radio City Music Hall Rockettes** and Broadway Revues. She joined the **Ziegfeld Follies** and toured with the troupe in 1927-28.

After her dance career ended in the 1940s, she pursued writing and editing, becoming fiction editor at *Seventeen* Magazine. Later in her life she published poems, gathering them into little books, some of which commented on aging. She died at the Lillian Booth Actors' Home in Englewood, N.J. at the age of 101.

The following is a poem from her self-published book *Songs of Senescence* (2003).

#### Take It From a Tough Old Bird

*This leathery hen will not call it a day  
Nor has any intention to do so,  
For my wattles are up and I'm on my way  
To as many farewells as Caruso.*

#### TRIVIA TEASER

**Question: Why did the East side of Beloit develop faster than the West side of the river?**

**Answer:** The East side of the river was surveyed by the government as early as 1835 whereas, the West side was not officially surveyed until 1940. The land on the West side was held for speculation by the Ogden Associates at \$10 to \$40 an acre for which they had paid the government \$1.25 an acre at the Green Bay Land Office. The land on the East side could be purchased at \$1.25 an acre which encouraged the growth and settlement of this area. The first settler to break the barrier on the West side was John Hackett when he purchased 400 acres from the Ogden interests for farmland and subdivision for homes. He built the first home on the West side on the site of the former municipal center. The center was built "around" his well-built stone home at a later date.

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## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

Because of our members, the Beloit Historical Society is able to preserve and share Beloit's legacy. As a member of the Beloit Historical Society, you join hundreds of others who care for and sustain Beloit's traditions, artifacts and stories.

### Your membership benefits include:

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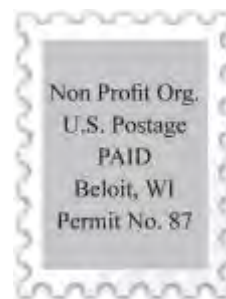


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# Confluence Newsletter

*Sharing Beloit's History to  
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## **The A. B. Carpenter Home**

The story of one of Beloit's most famous homes  
and the remarkable man who lived there.  
Details on page 4-5

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