



# Confluence

*Where Past Meets Present*

Volume 30 Issue 6

**BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Nov./Dec., 2021

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**Contact Info**  
**Phone**  
 608-365-7835

**Address**  
 845 Hackett Street  
 Beloit, Wisconsin 53511

**Office Hours**  
 Monday - Friday  
 12:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

**Email**  
[info@beloithistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@beloithistoricalsociety.com)

**Website**  
[www.beloithistoricalsociety.com](http://www.beloithistoricalsociety.com)

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BHS Presents our first.....

## QUILT SHOW

**Saturday Nov. 6, 2021 9:00 – 5:00**

**Sunday Nov. 7, 2021 10:00 – 4:00**

Admission: Adults \$5; Children \$2; under age 5 free - BHS Members are Free

### **Showcasing talented local quilters!**

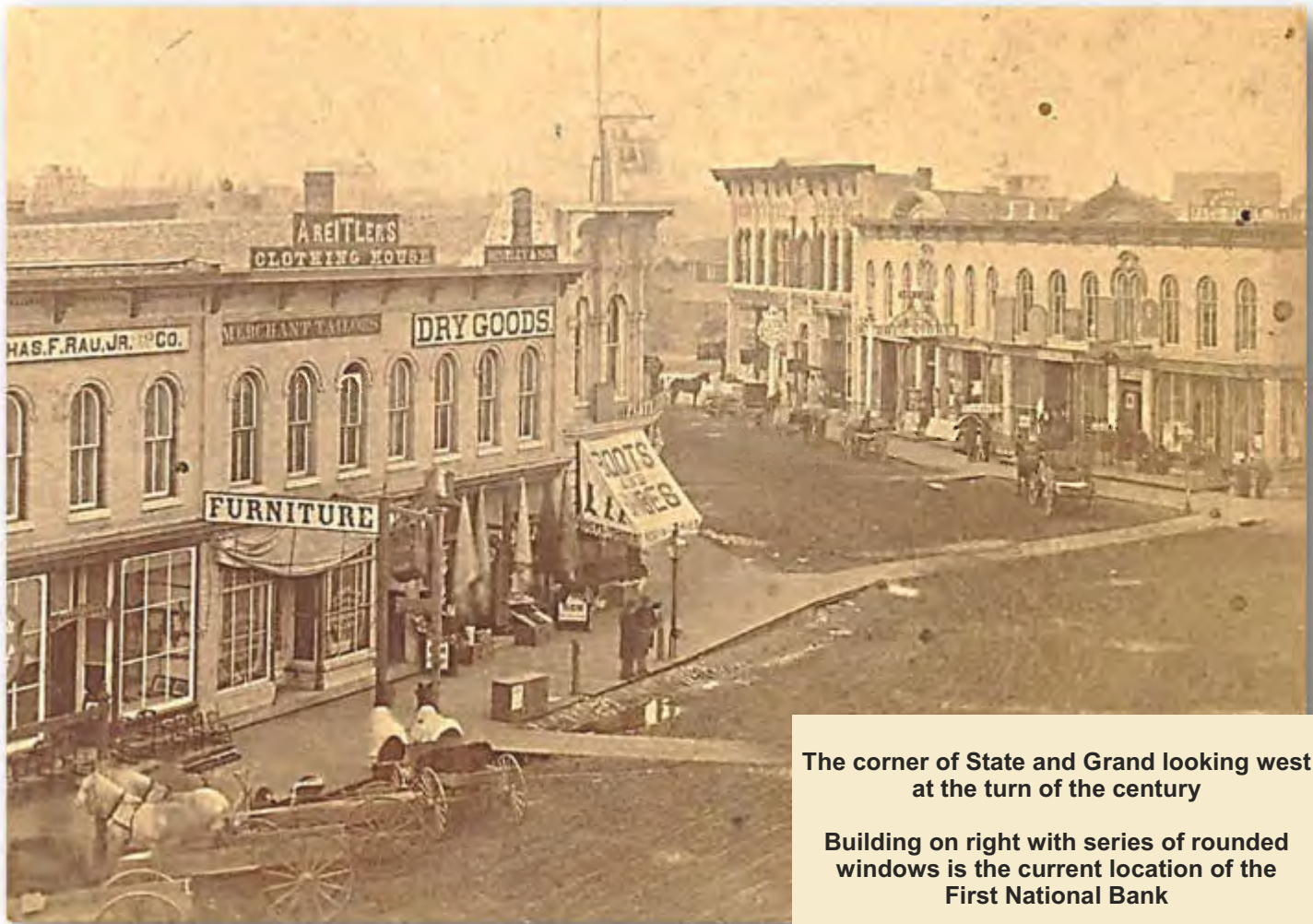
Show will include displays of historic quilting tools & equipment as well as displays of different ways to store and preserve quilts. Some vintage and antique quilts also on display.

Go to [beloithistoricalsociety.com](http://beloithistoricalsociety.com) for more information & registration form.



This Mariner's Compass quilt from our collection is a star variation as blocks are set on point instead of a square straight set. Quilt dates to circa 1858. Donated in 1970 by Charlotte Smith





The corner of State and Grand looking west  
at the turn of the century

Building on right with series of rounded  
windows is the current location of the  
First National Bank

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Many of you will be surprised to learn that Fourth Street, in the early history of Beloit, was the fashionable section of the community. There were other areas which also represented the elite, the cultured and probably the most sophisticated of settlers.

Shortly after the turn of the century, starting at the "horse fountain" at the Grand Avenue intersection, "grand" houses in that day lined Fourth nearly to Roosevelt Avenue. Some residences were more pretentious than others. The Brittan home, on the northwest corner of Fourth and Grand, deserves to be spotlighted on its own. (future Confluence article)

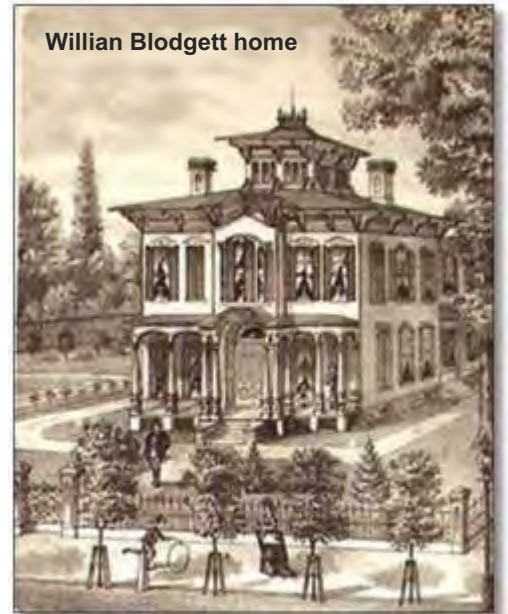


Looking north on Fourth Street from Grand Avenue  
Brittan home would have been on the corner to the left

The southwest corner of Fourth and St. Lawrence was the location of the William Blodgett home. The grandson of our founder Caleb Blodgett, was a merchant, manufacturer, land-owner and a political force in the 1880s and 1890s. He was inducted into the Beloit Historical Hall of Fame in 1938. He also was a home-owner of distinctive tastes.

A circular, asphalt sidewalk to his front door enclosed a grass and flowers plot around an ornamental fountain. The black ornamental fountain spouted water from a height of several feet to a basin about four feet from the ejector and the water spilled to another basin at the ground level. At the rear of the home was a large barn which conformed in architecture to the home. It housed stables, the horses and at least two rigs.

When the Blodgetts left the home, it was occupied by the George Williams family who maintained the home, stables and fountain. The fountain was removed in later years in favor of more lawn to provide room to play croquet. The hoops and stakes took the place of the fountain. The Williams and their friends played croquet, not only during the day, but in the evening and occasionally well after dark with the use of lanterns. Residents in that area recall the games were often spirited and the cheers, after a well-played whack with a mallet, could be heard a block away.



William Blodgett home



The house was demolished in the mid 1900s and was replaced with a Goodall-Shell gasoline station. The station is currently part of a project by Peter Gabriel, owner of Casa Grande, to convert it into Grande Hall 2, a new banquet hall. The former gas station will be part of a rooftop deck for outdoor events. The project has been ongoing during the pandemic. (left)

(most information came from an article printed decades ago in the Beloit Daily News)

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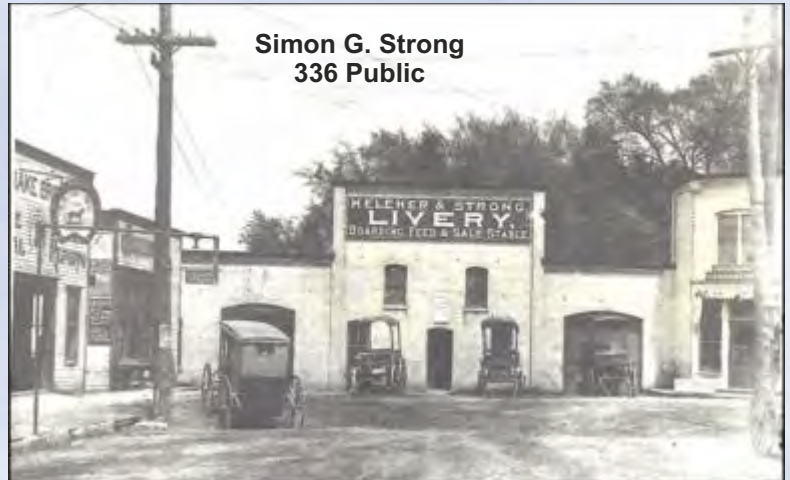
## The Days of the Livery

The horse and buggy days of the past still hold a special place in the memories or imaginations of all of us. It is hard to visualize early Beloit when there were no cars, trucks or gas stations. Simon G. Strong spoke to the members of BHS on February 21, 1941 about his experiences as a livery owner. This is an excerpt:

*"I started in the livery business in spring of 1899. I bought out a man by the name of Edward Stone. He was a veteran liveryman about 80 years old and almost blind. There was at this time 5 livery stables in Beloit. They were **Robinson Bros.** (428-32 Broad St.), **Snyder Bros.** (211 W. Grand), **Murphy Bros.** (115 St. Paul Ave.), **Charles Smith** (427 State) and myself (336 Public).*

*My barn had 40 stalls and I always tried to have 25 to 30 horses for my livery work. The balance of stalls were occupied by boarders. I boarded 6 horses for the 3 Express Co's: American, United States and Wells Fargo. I also boarded some of the horses for the doctors: Drs. Carr, Bennett, Edwards, Mary Bartlett and Dr. Fox. I also boarded some horses for the merchants. My best customers were the undertakers, Beloit Water Gas & Electric Co., City of Beloit, Telephone Co. and Post Office. College students were good customers especially in hiring hacks for their parties at the different fraternities. The Panhellenic party was the big college party of the year that always was held in the month of February. The demand for hacks for that occasion was tremendous. I had 5 hacks and they would all be engaged one month in advance. We took 40 people to and from the party. My men usually got through by 1:00 or 1:15 a.m. then I would have a lunch for the men at the restaurant. We were lucky if we got to our homes by 2:30. We were also very busy on the nights when concerts were held at the 1st Congregational Church or some noted star was the attraction.*

*The best paying business I had was the funeral business. This work was easy on the horses. We could always figure on putting them on another trip when they returned. (Morticians John Houston, Meehan & Rau, G.N. Probst and Jenkins stored their hearses in Strong's stable. He provided the horses and drivers. The men were rented complete with black frock coats with brass buttons, high silk hats and white gloves).*



Simon G. Strong  
336 Public



428-32 Broad St.

*There were constant expenses in our business. Purchasing hacks, buggies, surreys and bearer's coaches as well as harnesses was very expensive. Feed fluctuated in price, horses needed to be shod. Horses were bought anywhere and everywhere. Some were bought in the large cities like Chicago and Milwaukee and some in smaller places. I always liked to buy my horses from farmers if they had the kind I wanted. I also bought horses at the horse sales which were held for quite a few years every month at the Haymarket.*

Robinson Livery (left) consisted of a horse barn and a two-story carriage house on the Broad St. side and a stone barn on the Pleasant St. side

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## The Haymarket Stables (newspaper clipping 1905)

The Haymarket Stables which were established five years ago by C.E. Aldrich and last March bought by the present owner, E.J. Ralston, **are the largest of their kind in the state of Wisconsin.** They are 133x128' and can accommodate 425 horses at one time. The place is well known to the farmers throughout this district for its courteous welcome and the good care taken of the horses belonging to the men and women driving to town. In connection with the stables a fine lunch counter is run, where a good lunch can be had. A full line of harness and up-to-date horse goods is carried and a line of hardware is being added. Mr. Ralston is probably as well known to the farmers as is any Beloit man and is well liked by all.



Third St. near W. Grand  
Below: horse water trough at corner of W. Grand/4th St. c 1906

*There were a few elegant private horse-drawn vehicles in Beloit at this time. Porter Yates had a very nice, expensive trap and silver mounted harness. I bought this outfit when he changed to a horseless carriage.*

*There was considerable sport in horse racing in the early days, especially in the winter time when we had good sleighing. Broad St. was the place where most of these races took place. Most any afternoon you would see the boys who thought they had fast horses on the street trying to best their competitor's horse. It created a lot of excitement and the street would be lined with spectators. When the sleighing was too poor to race on Broad St., they would have their racing meets on the ice on the river above the Portland Ave. bridge. The Broad St. races always started at the corner of Broad and Park and ended at the corner of Pleasant and Broad. Good sleighing at best never lasted very long and the demand while it did last was tremendous. The students and town boys were anxious to take their lady friend for a ride. Every sleigh was equipped with bells and warm robes and they seemed to have the time of their lives.*



Perhaps the most vivid memories of the livery barn days are the sleigh ride parties which were provided to nearly every school room in Beloit. The youngsters could scarcely wait until there was enough snow so that the strong, well-groomed horses with their flashily decorated harnesses, could pull the big bus-type sleighs over the streets and county roads.

Murphy Livery, one of the last landmarks of the horse and buggy days in Beloit, was razed October 31, 1931. It was very common at the time to replace a razed livery, blacksmith shop or carriage maker with something connected to the automobile. It might be a gas station, repair shop, battery and ignition shop, garage or a lowly parking lot. Most of the liveries started going out of business around 1923 when they finally surrendered to the automobile.

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**Sparks From the Flaming Wheel** by Joseph W. Rhodes  
 excerpts from a memoir by Mrs. Ardis Boynton

### Oh! and apple butter making....

Grandmother directed, but it took a lot of preparation before we could even start the real process. The men made a tripod of iron pipes with three large rocks under a 40-gallon copper kettle to hold it steady. The kettle had to be scoured with vinegar and salt, and about a dozen stones the size of a silver dollar had to be scrubbed too. They were to help keep the sauce from sticking and burning on the bottom of the kettle. My father made a wooden paddle with a long handle so we didn't have to stand too close to the fire to stir, which is almost a constant job on the second day of the process. The apples had to be taken to the cider press a day or two in advance.

Grandma's recipe was: 60 gallons of cider, 6 bushels of apples to start with. The first day the cider was boiled down to 20 gallons. The second day was apple peeling and coring, most of the day, adding them gradually to the boiling cider. Along toward the end of the day the apples were all cooked and the apple butter was smooth so the sugar was added—one pound for each gallon of apple butter. But, first, you added to the sugar two rounding tablespoons of cinnamon and one rounding tablespoon of cloves to each 20 gallons of sauce. Then it was ready to can in the usual way. Mmmmm good!

Of course, on the farm there was always the big, important crops to be harvested. The farmers in our neighborhood banded together and brought their own harvesting machines. There usually was a crew of about 20 men to operate the whole thing, and that's where the ladies entered the picture—dinner for those men. A typical harvest dinner was mashed potatoes, roast beef or pork, gravy, white and dark bread, whatever vegetable was in the garden, sliced tomatoes, pickles, pie and cheese, cookies or doughnuts and coffee. It was never mentioned as such, but there really was a contest as to who put on the best dinner, because when hubby came home from one of those harvest days the first question usually was, "What did you have for dinner?"

Oh yes, I'll admit the modern way is easier, more efficient, safer, but what's to take the place of the satisfaction of gloating over those rows of shining glass jars, shelves of them full of the products of your own kettle and proof of your own harvest?



### DID YOU KNOW?

The 25 Beloiters who had \$2-\$5 ((\$22-\$109 in today's dollars), could join the Public Library Association when it was formed in 1863. A library room was found over a downtown dry goods store and stocked with 1,000 volumes. Timothy Dwight volunteered to be the first librarian. A fee for using a book was paid on each withdrawal and a fine paid for each overdue return. This plan worked for several years until Timothy got tired of it. The association then hired Sallie Ritchie as a paid librarian for \$50 a year. The facility caught fire forcing the dissolution of the library. The books were divided between the two fire departments. They made the books available to the public until the situation became unworkable for several reasons. On March 23, 1893 things came to a head with the public clamoring long and loudly for a public library. On November 9, 1894 the people of Beloit voted overwhelmingly for the library. One was begun in 1894 on the second floor of what later became the Jupiter Store. By 1895 the membership stood at 1,000 and the library housed 1,500 volumes and 845 juvenile books.

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Ole Christian Bendixen Hannevold in his Norwegian Military uniform

## The Hermit of the Big Hills

We were happy to receive more information from **Karen Clark-Hansen** about **Ole Hannevold** (the Big Hills Hermit) who was featured in our last issue. Ole was the brother of her great-great grandmother, Olina Hannevold Baukin.

Ole was born in West Toten, Norway on June 21, 1845. He emigrated from Norway at the age of 24 after his military service. He and his brother Even sailed first to England and then to America in 1869 settling in Black Earth, Wisconsin, where their aunt lived. He stayed in Black Earth for 3 years and then farmed in North Dakota.

When he returned to Wisconsin, he joined his siblings and mother in Beloit. He did factory work in Beloit and Milwaukee but found he didn't like that type of work. About 1893, he moved into his Big Hills cabin where he farmed for 24 years until his passing in 1918. It appears he may have spent some of the cold winters with relatives in Beloit.

*"The Story of My Life"* by Gudrun Hanewall is held in the BHS collection. She writes about an outing to Ole's cabin in 1896: *"On my first Christmas Day in America, a group of us skated up the Rock River to the Big Hills where a relative lived in a small cabin. At the cabin we made waffles and coffee having a fine time. As we were skating home, Fred Lundquist fell through a hole in the ice. That set us all off on a laughing tangent."*

In 1936, Clara Baukin (daughter of Olina), wrote the following about her uncle and his cabin: *"It was many a family gathering and skating party that wound up there. Not only was it a family gathering place but in the days of the Old Steamboat run by Captain Berg, big parties of town's folk participated in the merry making of the days."*

Ole died of pneumonia at the St. Lawrence Ave. home of his sister Olina on Feb. 4, 1918. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery with brother Even and several other relatives.

Many thanks to Karen Clark-Hansen for this information which helps fill in the gaps about our **"Hermit of the Big Hills."**

The Beloit Historical Society is hiring a part-time Administrative Assistant to work closely with the Executive Director to enhance operational efficiency.



This position includes some administrative and clerical tasks such as processing incoming and outgoing mail, keeping the filing system efficient and easy to use, and overseeing room rentals. A detailed job description is available on the website, [www.beloithistory.org/about](http://www.beloithistory.org/about). Applications and resumes are being accepted until November 19, 2021.

## TRIVIA TEASER

**Question: What year did Beloit build its first jail on the corner of Broad and Mill?**

**Answer:** The jail was built shortly after Beloit was incorporated in 1856. Lawlessness was not much of a problem in early Beloit. Outside of problems with land sharks and some pilfering by Indians, very few instances occurred. Few of the original homes had locks on the doors and none had locks on the windows.

In 1907 a new jail was built at 430 State (a parking lot across from First National Bank today). The second jail did not come too soon as the number of drunks arraigned in 1908 totaled 248.

In 1955 new detention quarters were housed in a special section on the third floor of the new administration building on W. Grand. The police department occupied the first floor.

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## From the Collection - Victory Mail or V-Mail

During wartime, mail is significant in keeping up the morale of the soldiers as well as those at home. During World War II, military officials recognized the importance of mail and worked to guarantee that communications would continue between families and soldiers.

Victory mail or V-Mail started on June 15, 1942 to speed up mail service for American armed forces overseas. Wartime mail created great bulk in need of transportation. This bulk took up space in military transports that would otherwise be used for needed supplies. The United States Post Office, War and Navy Departments, searched for a solution to decrease the bulk of letters. They looked at the British Airgraph Service, which was microfilming military messages, and used them as a model for letters.

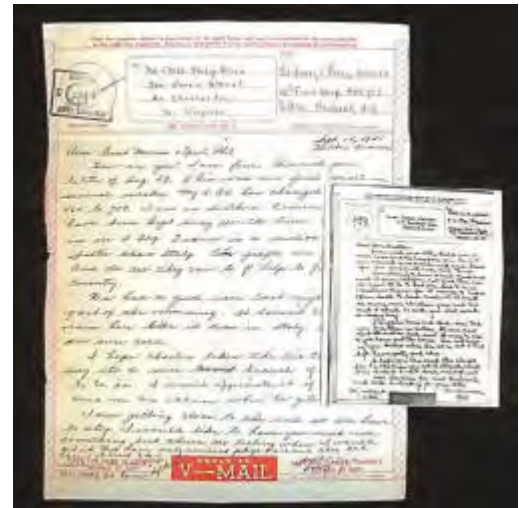
V-Mail used a standard form and microfilm processing to produce lighter weight and small bulk cargo for transport planes to carry. This increased the available space for war supplies and allowed the letters to be delivered to military personnel more quickly.



The standardized V-Mail forms were sold in packages at local stores and post offices. The final microfilmed letters and their envelopes are at the lower edge of the image.



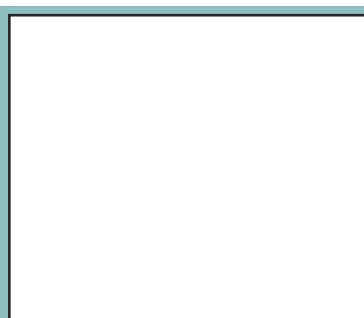
Source of poster:  
National Archives (44-PA-1191)



A letter written on the standardized form with an example of the final microfilmed letter at right. Note the size difference.

The United States entered World War II following the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. American soldiers (and many Beloiters) were deployed throughout Europe, Asia and Africa, separated from friends and family. Letters maintained the link between soldiers and their loved ones. The importance of mail was second only to food. Risk of danger and the uncertainty of war increased the importance of letters. V-Mail was promoted with advertisements as a patriotic contribution to the war effort by saving cargo space and providing inspirational messages to soldiers.

**Photos and letters from Beloit military members are on display in our new Military Room Exhibit**



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## Message from Executive Director , Donna Langford

As 2021 draws to a close, it is a time of reflection of the past year and planning for the next. During 2021 the Society was able to reopen its doors to the public. We thank Mrs. Beloit Shatoria Teague for cutting the ribbon to officially reopen our doors on September 10<sup>th</sup> during the Heritage Days festivities. September 14<sup>th</sup> we were able to add five new inductees into the Sports Hall of Fame with an in-person ceremony. November will be a colorful month at BHS as we hold a Quilt Show. Local quilt makers are invited to display their handiwork the weekend of November 6 & 7<sup>th</sup>. Historic sewing tools and equipment from the Society's collections will be on display during the month of November.

This fall the Society is experiencing a staffing change. Program Coordinator Julia Schoenthal has moved to her next milestone on her career path. I wish her success with her new job, and am pleased that she will continue to be involved at BHS as a volunteer. A part-time Administrative Assistant position has been created and applications are being accepted.

Stay safe, healthy and in good spirits!



Mrs. Beloit Shatoria Teague cuts ribbon at BHS reopening  
Heritage Days - September 10  
Julia Schoenthal (left)  
Ex. Dir. Donna Langford (right)

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, the **Rock County Wednesday Walkers** were the first group to tour the recently reopened Beloit Historical Society. The walkers were given an in depth and behind the scenes tour of the facilities, along with a presentation by **John Sabaka** on the history of the Beloit Historical Society and early Beloit. The walkers were most impressed by the "water witch" located in the main entrance and by the fact that the Fairbanks-Morse football team, the Fairies, beat the Green Bay Packers twice. Some participants fondly remembered the old Lincoln Junior High and were pleased with how wonderfully BHS has refurbished the building.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**David Nelson** (2021 Christmas Gift Membership)

**Dennis Nelson** (2021 Christmas Gift Membership)

**Linda Smith**



## United Way Day of Caring

Eight employees from **EcoLab** volunteered their time at the Beloit Historical Society on September 22<sup>nd</sup> as part of the United Way Day of Caring. The energetic group started the day cleaning out the garage. Reorganization and removal of scrap lumber opened up the space providing a more efficient use of the area. The group then enthusiastically moved to the second project of removing overgrowth along the property fence line. They removed everything from the alley edge of the property to the end of the building dramatically opening up the fence line. BHS volunteer Alan Katterhenry and BHS board director Tom Larsen joined the EcoLab group.

Thank you Ecolab volunteers!



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## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Jackie Jackson

We were very fortunate to have Jackie Jackson join our board last year. She brings with her a wealth of community organization and board experience.

Her family relocated to Racine from Newport, Rhode Island, in 1961. They were active in the Civil Rights movement and in Racine politics. She obtained her masters degree from UW-Madison and began working in Beloit in 1978 in the Developmental Disabilities Counseling program of Catholic Social Services. In 1983 she began working as a School Social Worker for the School District of Beloit and remained there until her retirement in January, 2016.

She has taught at the post secondary level as an adjunct instructor for 25+ years, first at UW-Whitewater and then at Blackhawk Technical College where she is currently employed. She also serves as a co-advisor of the Multicultural Alliance at BTC.

Jackie has always been involved in community activities and has volunteered for Special Olympics, United Cerebral Palsy of So. Wisconsin and the Girl Scouts. She is the co-founder of The Foundry, a theatre group for people who have cognitive disabilities. She serves on multiple boards besides ours: Caritas, Parent Advocates for Performing Arts, Wisconsin School Social Worker Ass., Visit Beloit and Neighborworks Blackhawk Region.

Jackie eagerly accepted the invitation to join the BHS Board. She feels we need to present a more diverse "face" to the community. She is impressed with our strategic plan and is enjoying her experience working with Ex. Dir, Donna Langford. She thinks BHS has great potential and is excited to be part of our growth. **Welcome aboard, Jackie!**

## SPORTS HALL OF FAME



Left to right: Jim Franz, Lifetime Achievement winner, inductees: Bill Houck, Barry Upshaw, Jay McGregory, Kristen Witting and representatives for Duane Vance, Deann Evans, sister, and Leon Peterson, uncle.

The **35th annual Beloit Historical Society Elliott-Perring Sport's Hall of Fame** was held at the Rotary River Center, September 14, 2021 honoring the following:

**Jim Franz**, Haskell-Barkin Lifetime Achievement Award.

Veteran local sport's reporter and sport's editor for over four decades winning many awards

**Bill Houck**, one of Beloit Memorial's best hockey players and all time scoring leader. He played for Madison Capitols and UW-Eau Claire where he was an All-American.

**Barry Upshaw**, one of Beloit Memorial's top three athletes in football, basketball and track.

**Jay McGregory**, named Turner basketball team's most valuable player for three consecutive years. He graduated holding four school records.

**Kristen Witting**, lettered in four sports and won Rookie of the Year on the varsity boy's hockey team in 2001. Played for UW-Madison hockey helping her team win the NCAA National Championship in 2006.

**Duane Vance**, a unanimous All-Big Eight First Team selection and honorable mention in USA Today's All-American Basketball Team. Also a football standout, he received the Daily News' Reichstein Award as Beloit Memorial's top senior athlete and other awards too numerous to list.

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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:

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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### Sustaining Memberships



Sustaining members get all the same benefits as a typical BHS membership, but they also receive a North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) Association membership. Their NARM card provides access for free or with membership rights to over 1,000 other museums.

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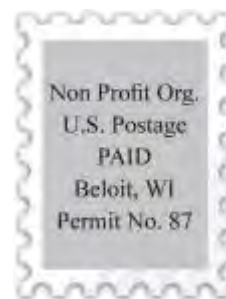


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# Confluence Newsletter

*Sharing Beloit's History to  
Enhance Community Pride*



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East Grand Avenue bridge at turn of the century  
2nd National Bank left-center  
"Jupiter" location on right  
The second floor of "Jupiter" was an early location for  
the Beloit Public Library

(see article on page 6)

## Beloit Historical Society Sustaining Memberships

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