

Confluence

Where Past Meets Present

Volume 32 Issue 3

BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May/June 2023

In this Issue

Looking Back.....	2
Other Beloits.....	3
The 1883 Tornado.....	4-5
Wisconsin Death Trip.....	6
From the Collection.....	7
Director's Message.....	8
Volunteer Spotlight.....	9
Annual Meeting.....	10

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What's happening with the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead?



In April of 2022 the Beloit Historical Society commissioned a feasibility study to determine a future use of the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead (formerly the Bartlett Museum). The use of the property needs to be relevant to today's community and to generate revenue to create an economically sustainable situation. The house has been closed for a few years because of Covid and the necessity to connect to the city sewer. The consultants estimate costs of just under \$1 million to upgrade systems in the house and at the site to reopen the property for public visitation. That number does not include any continuing costs for staffing or programming at the site.

In the 1960s and 1970s Hanchett-Bartlett was BHS's center of operations. During this time, the facility was toured by local schools and actively visited by members of the community. However, the needs of the community have changed over time and schools are no longer funding trips to the homestead. This results in the need to create an innovative use for the property.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a document that is issued to collect bids from qualified developers and businesses that will offer potential uses or projects for a property or organization.

As a result of the feasibility study, the Beloit Historical Society has issued an RFP which requires all submitted proposals to demonstrate how they will meet requirements of the National Register of Historic Places and the Beloit Landmark Commission in order to preserve the historical integrity of the property. Submitted proposals will be reviewed by the board of directors with a goal of making the property useful and relevant again. It is our hope that we can find a solution that will benefit BHS's mission, the Beloit community, and maintain the historic integrity of the property.

Looking Back - Lunchtime Concerts at Fairbanks Morse



Employees gathered around the Fairbanks Morse Concert Band in 1928 for a noon-hour concert on the diesel engine erecting floor on "The Hill". Business-suited men and women from the office in their long skirts joined with front row views. The shop workers were farther back with some perched on the partially completed big engines. Frank R. Lodak was the bandleader. The band also gave concerts in the summer at Horace White Park and other locations around the city (right).



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Continuing our look at the origins of other Beloits, we come to Beloit, Lyon County, Iowa. This town was situated in the northwest corner of Iowa on the banks of the Big Sioux River which forms the border with South Dakota. The city of Canton, South Dakota, is located on the opposite bank. One of its earliest settlers was Lewis P. Hyde who may have been a relative of the Beloit banking family (the Hyde in Hyde and Brittan Bank). Another early resident was Halvor Nelson, who in 1867 purchased 4,635 acres of land in this area. The land was for the establishment of a Norwegian colony, sawmill and dam. By 1871, James A. Carpenter, a lumberman from Beloit, WI, had purchased these assets from Nelson and platted a townsite naming it Beloit for his hometown.

Beloit, Iowa, prospered in the late 19th Century. The Sioux City and Pembina Railroad Company built a link to Beloit in 1878. In 1881, the private Lutheran "Marshall Academy" was relocated to Beloit, Iowa, and was renamed Augustana Seminary and Academy. By 1884, when it was called Augustana College, it relocated across the river to Canton, South Dakota. The former campus was repurposed to become The Norwegian Lutheran Church Orphan's Home in 1890 and was the largest antecedent for what is today known as Lutheran Social Services in Iowa.



The early school and classroom in Beloit Children's Home

The Beloit Children's Home, as it was later called, was located on a 600-acre farm campus containing four institutional buildings, a chapel and numerous farm buildings. At its peak in 1927, the home housed 177 children. In 1945 the facility was closed. Some of the buildings remain as part of a farm in Beloit, and a cemetery marker memorializes residents who died during those 56 years. There are graves or memorials for sixteen members of the Carpenter family and Jas. A. Carpenter is listed as the cemetery grantor. By 1925 the population of Beloit had dwindled to 25 and today it is only identified by signs.

In a telephone conversation with the Clark-Hansens, who are BHS members living in Iowa, they guessed that they may be the only members to have been to Beloit, Iowa. Can any other member claim this distinction? I have heard from several readers of this series of articles that they have visited Beloit, Alabama, but have any of you visited any of the other Beloits?

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The 1883 Tornado by Carol Mankiewicz

On June 12, 1883, 140 years ago, Beloit made the news in the *New York Times*. The day before, tornadoes struck the upper Midwest from Fayette County in Iowa to Harvard, Illinois. Most of the tornadoes hit more rural areas; such was not the case for Beloit. At about 5:50 pm, a tornado thundered up the Rock River in Beloit. It tore off the cover of the Northwestern Railroad bridge and crumpled the main structure (**Figure 1**). The funnel then split in two, with one branch continuing up the river valley and the other veering off to the northeast, both leaving destruction in their wakes. Three days later, the Beloit Free Press summarized the damage: 1 killed, 6 wounded, demolished bridge, church spire wrecked, business structures badly damaged, residences annihilated. Edward Halloran, a mill hand at the East Side Paper Mill, died when he was crushed under a stone wall ripped apart by the tornado (**Figure 2**). It's a wonder that more weren't injured given the damage on the busiest corner in downtown Beloit. The shredded remains of most of the metal roof of Bort & Baily and surrounding stores were deposited in the street and bricks near the roofline came tumbling down (**Figure 3**).



Figure 1. The remains of the Northwestern Railroad Bridge. Most of the men are standing on what had been the bridge cover. This view today would include part of the new stadium on the right and the post office and police department on the left.



Figure 2. The damage at the paper mill on the east side of the river near the dam where the sole death occurred.



Figure 3. The southwest corner at what is now East Grand Ave. and State St.



Figure 4. The northwest corner of East Grand Ave. and State St. The Emerson Pharmacy occupied the corner until c1920; today, it's the First National Bank and Trust Co.

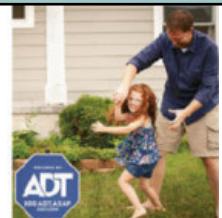
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The 1883 Tornado by Carol Mankiewicz

5

Other brick and stone buildings in the downtown area (Figure 4) were relatively spared with only blown-out windows. The torrential rains that followed the funnel clouds, however, caused much damage to merchandise. Frame structures at the north end of State Street did not fare well (Figure 5), nor did some elm trees that lined Broad Street (Figure 6). As the funnel moved away from the river, it mainly stayed high, which was lucky for most other businesses and residences. Churches with their high steeples were not so lucky. (Figure 7) The steeple on the First Congregational Church ended up in what is now Horace White Park and that of the First Presbyterian Church was deposited on its northeast side (Figure 7). The steeple of the Baptist Church (on what is now East Grand Avenue between Pleasant and Prospect Streets) was damaged, but still erect. No one carried insurance covering tornadoes, so individuals and businesses had to finance the estimated damage of about \$100,000 (almost 3 million today). The losses certainly contributed to the local financial crisis in Beloit that year when several businesses folded, including the paper mill company.



Figure 5. The tilted frame walls of the carriage repository. The structure was along the east bank of the river; today, it would occupy the space riverside of the Ironworks Hotel.



Figure 6. Fallen elm at the (northeast?) corner of Broad and Pleasant Streets. At the time, many large residential homes and elm trees lined this part of Broad St.

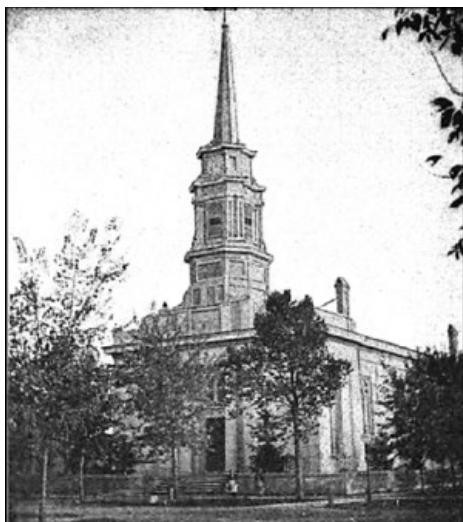


Figure 7. The First Presbyterian Church on the southeast corner of Broad and Pleasant Streets. On the left is a view of the church sometime prior to June 1883 showing the tall steeple. On the right is the post June 11, 1883 view.

(from *Past Made Present: Presbyterians in Wisconsin 1830-1900*)

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Wisconsin Death Trip

A podcast discussion of a 1973 book titled **Wisconsin Death Trip** by Michael Lesy was already half over but was interesting enough to catch a new listener. Lesy was studying for his masters at the University of Wisconsin in the late 1960s when he came across a collection of photographs taken between 1880 and 1900 by Black River Falls photographer Charles Van Shaick which were preserved by the **Wisconsin Historical Society**. The Society salvaged 8,000 of the 30,000 glass plate negatives that were left stored in his studio for over 30 years. Lesy combined some of these with research of state newspapers which gave an account of economic turmoil, crime, disease, mental illness and violence at this time.

Below are some newspaper clippings from Beloit.



1885 Frederick Windex, an aged Rock County farmer, committed suicide by drowning himself in the pool where his little daughter had been accidentally drowned 2 years ago. (10/30, State)

One of the photographs featured in the book shows Grace Bowman Klein (seated in middle). She was the maternal grandmother of Deb Fallon, a former BMHS teacher and current BHS member. Grace lived with this family when she was a teacher in the Black River Falls area.

1891 Mrs. Phillip Fredericks, aged 82 years who was partly insane, threw herself in her neighbor's cistern at Beloit and was drowned. She had long planned death in this manner. (7/23, State)

1893 Mrs. A.J. Cowles, aged 87 years, died at Beloit. She had been married to Deacon Cowles, who survives her, for nearly 68 years. On the occasion of her last birthday her eccentric husband presented her with a coffin which he had made with his own hands and in which she was buried. (3/16 State)

1894 Five tramps went in Groshong's store and restaurant at Beloit, drove the proprietor and help out at the point of revolvers, emptied the till, and made themselves at home...finally having a free-for-all fight over the division of the spoils. (6/21, State)

1899 A young son of August Dietz died of diphtheria at Beloit. This is the third death of almost 30 cases in the city and vicinity this winter. All the other patients are well, Antitoxin has been issued in nearly all cases with gratifying results. (12/28, State)

1900 The body of John C. Hanover, which had been buried 11 years, was exhumed at Avon, to be reinterred in Beloit. On opening the casket, the body appeared to be in a perfect state of preservation excepting that it had become somewhat darker. (3/8, State)

1900 At the funeral of George Smith...in Beloit, while the relatives were taking a last look at the remains at the grave, one of the cross staves supporting the casket broke, letting it plunge forward, breaking the coffin. (3/29, State)

And finally....this is interesting even though it is not a death story (but perhaps it is!)

1885 Israel Love, aged 80 years, was married for the **sixth** time at Beloit. (10/30, State)

We are fortunate that the Beloit Public Library has 12 copies available for check out through the SHARE system.

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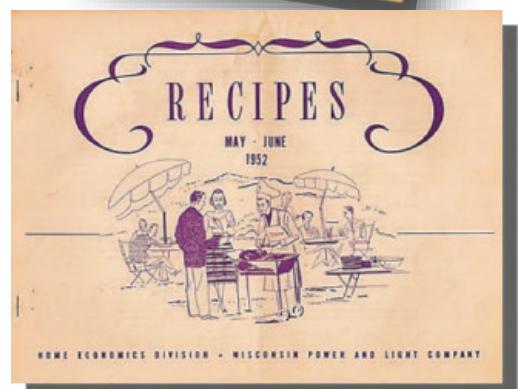
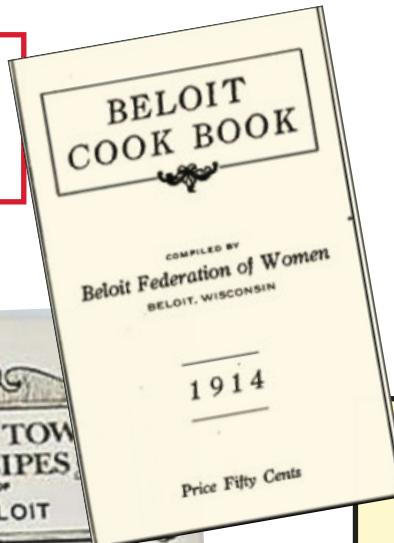
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As the times change, so does the food. Did you know that a large number of recipe books were published in Beloit? Even Wisconsin Power and Light, the former occupiers of the Beloit College "Powerhouse", published a monthly or seasonal recipe book (below)! In 1914 the **Beloit Federation of Women's Clubs** created the "Beloit Cook Book" as a fundraiser. This book gives us great insight into what recipes people in Beloit were excited to share with the community. While of course, there are many familiar favorites that have stood the test of time, there are also some recipes that most people today would think twice about before making.

Have you ever heard of Egg Lemonade? It was made with lemon juice, water, powdered sugar and one raw egg shaken right into the cup. Have you ever tried deep fried tripe (cow stomach)? Milk soaked rabbit? What about giblet (chicken organ) dressing? Have you ever been compelled to make pudding out of suet (raw animal fat)? This book has three different ways! There is even a recipe for a raw beef sandwich. And for dessert? How about a nice hot cup of gruel? This one calls for one hard boiled egg grated into a hot cup of milk with salt. Delicious...

For those who would like a healthier option for a meal, how about.....

College Girl's Salad : Put a slice of onion between two orange slices and coat with French dressing.



If you would like to look up any of these interesting recipes, or more like them, the "Beloit Cook Book" can be found in the **Luebke Family Memorial Library** at BHS. Find them on these pages.....

Egg Lemonade - p.17
 Tripe - p.123
 Rabbit - p. 125
 Giblet Dressing - p.129
 Suet Pudding (3 ways) - p.164
 College Girl's Salad—p. 186
 Raw Beef Sandwich - p.19
 Egg Gruel - p.254

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Message from Executive Director, Donna Langford

This spring we welcome two additions to the society!

I am pleased to welcome **Kiersten Faldet** as the WAICU summer intern this year. BHS applied to the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) to be a host site and was accepted for one internship position which includes a generous stipend from WAICU. Time was spent this spring reviewing many applications and conducting interviews. Kiersten, whose career goal is museum collection management, will be at BHS full time for ten weeks. She will be focusing on cataloging new donations to the collections, learning how to document and store a variety of material types such as photographs, historic letters, and objects as diverse as ceramic plates, books and clocks.

I am also pleased to welcome **Diane Ray** as a Collection Archivist at BHS. A generous donation made it possible for this temporary position which focuses on the organization and cataloging of the BHS archival collections. Diane is a recent graduate of the University of Iowa, earning a Masters of Art degree in Library and Information Science. Diane will be with us for the next year.

I extend thanks and appreciation to **Leith Rohr** who has been the Archivist at BHS for the past few years. Leith has been instrumental in a newspaper identification project and conducting an inventory of the archival collection which revealed the presence of historic documents for sixty different women's clubs and organizations. Leith has cataloged fifty linear feet of this material, increasing our knowledge of local women's history. Leith continues to be involved as a member of the BHS Collections Committee.

TAKE A GUESS.....

Beloit observed its centennial in 1936, and an idea was generated to form a **"Hall of Beloit Builders and Founders"**. In January of 1938, Oscar Nelson, secretary of the Beloit Commercial Club, proposed that the "hall" be established to honor outstanding leaders who have made significant contributions to the greater good of our Beloit area.

The original 25 inductees had their portraits painted by the noted local artist **E.M.R. Weiner** and were presented to the public at a ceremony at Grinnell Hall June 16, 1940. The portraits were hung at the old Beloit Library and are now kept at BHS.

The very first inductee was William Blodgett, son of our founder Caleb Blodgett. Caleb founded our city in 1836 but was not inducted into the Hall until 1967. (We are not quite sure why this occurred, but we are sure happy that someone thought to include him!).

The outbreak of WWII halted any additional inductees until 1966 when M. Walter Dundore, curator of the Beloit Historical Society, brought the renamed **Beloit Hall of Fame** back to life.

A total of 314 people have been inducted into the Beloit Hall of Fame. Their biographies are on display for easy access to the public at Lincoln Center.

How many of the 314 people who have been inducted, do you think are women?

The first woman to be inducted into the Hall was Margaret Goodwin in 1966. The most recent induction ceremony in 2022 featured 2 women inductees: Linda Ward and Joanne Klett.

The total number of women inductees of the 314 is 38 or 12%. This is not a very good record. However, times change and Beloit mirrors the national trend. More recent years of ceremonies have included many more women than earlier as women are more likely to be recognized for their efforts and accomplishments.

Was your guess close?



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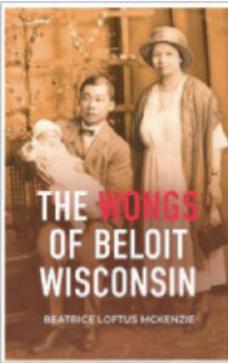
Katlin has volunteered with BHS since the end of 2022. She hopes to learn as much as she can about archive methodology. She plans to use the skills she is learning at BHS to further her career goals of working with historic and archival materials. Katlin attended Parkview High School in Orfordville. She went to college at UW Rock County and UW Platteville. Katlin works for RFS Cheese in Monroe. She is also an active member of the Luther Valley Church and spends her free time reading scripture and spending time with her niece and nephew. Since joining the BHS volunteer team Katlin has helped organize, catalog, and learn from paper documents relating to all manner of subjects. **Thanks Katlin!**



"The Wongs of Beloit" Chosen for May Book Club

"The Wongs of Beloit Wisconsin" by Beatrice McKenzie is the May reading selection for the Wisconsin Historical Society Book Club. Book Club meetings are by Zoom on the third Thursday of the month (May 18) from 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

Book lovers and amateur historians are invited to join the conversation. Participants will need a copy of the book (copies are available at the Beloit Historical Society), an internet connection to join by Zoom, and registration to join. Participation is free and open to anyone. To register, contact Liz Arbuckle, Northern Outreach Coordinator at liz.arbuckle@wisconsinhistory.org. Liz will provide the Zoom link and some discussion questions.



TKE

A very special thank you to the gentlemen from TKE Fraternity at Beloit College. They offered their services April 21st. to help us with some long overdue spring cleaning. They cleaned and organized the storage room off of the kitchen. Many thanks, guys!



TRIVIA TEASER

Before you attempt to answer this question, place your hand over the answer so that you are not tempted to peek by trying to read upside-down!

Question: Our city was officially named in 1837. But the city has had a total of five names since the first humans discovered this territory. What are they?

town is also a Beloit. Kudos to us!

credit Beloit, Wisconsin, as the reason their have learned that each of those other towns "Other Beloits" on page 3 of *Confidence*, you if you have been reading the series about

Yes, there are other Beloits in the country, but name of our city. It is unique and memorable.

Most Beloiters are likely pleased with the

never know for sure.

dead or had moved from the area. So, we will because most of the major characters were likely escaped further public attention only have a pretty good mess. The controversy to being an alteration of Detroit or based on the meaning of the name in French and you members claiming credit. Throw in references 1886 over who actually named our city with various people and changing committee

There had been disputes for many years until fifth and final name was Beloit.

applied to come up with a new name. The of 1837, when a committee of three was fourth, it remained by this name until August Caleb Bloodgett. The third was New Albany. Bloodgett's Place named after our founder Americans lived here. The second was predomnately during the time that Native know about was The Turtle or Turtle Village

Answer: The first "official" name that we



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ANNUAL MEETING May 31, 2023

- 5:30 - Doors Open
- 6:00 - Annual Business Meeting
- 6:30 - Dinner from Knute's
- 7:30 - Program

Transportation History of Beloit

Presented by
Jesse Herscher

Information and proxy ballots will be mailed to members. The business meeting portion is open and free to all members to attend.



1870, R.B. Clark
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Welcome New Members

Kenneth Boss	Robert Herscher
Nancy Boutelle	Elizabeth Paige
Roger Spenel	

Women in Leadership Panel

Executive Director Donna Langford was invited to be a panelist for the Women in Leadership Open Panel Discussion as part of Diversity Week at Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) on April 20th. Donna was one of five panelists who shared experiences with students about their journeys to their current career positions. The event was sponsored by the BTC's Business Professionals of America student organization.

May is Historic Preservation Month

BHS in partnership with the Downtown Beloit Association has invited **Jim Draeger** to present his program, "**Architecture that Sells: The Evolution of Commercial Buildings in Wisconsin**" as part of Historic Preservation month.

The lunch program will be held at the Downtown Beloit Association, 557 E. Grand Ave., Beloit on May 24th. Details will be on our website <http://beloithistory.org>.



Commercial areas reflect the economic vitality of cities. In an historical sense, they illustrate the rise and fall of commercial activity, the evolution of building materials and technology, and reflect periodic changes in public tastes and consumption patterns. This talk explores the architectural and historical evolution of commercial buildings in Wisconsin from early statehood to the mid-twentieth century.

From the Beloit newspaper - March 29, 1912 United Doctors - Beloit Institute

The United Doctors' new Beloit Institute over Bort and Bailey's store at E. Grand and State Street has been opened to the public, so many patients are taking advantage of the free treatment offers that the specialists have more work than they can handle; they can cure gall stones without using a knife.

(Notice this location is the same as described in Fig. 3 of the tornado article on page 4 of this issue).

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William Priebe and Elizabeth Meeks



We have our first Conservator Membership!

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