



Confluence

Where Past Meets Present

Volume 31 Issue 5

BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sept./Oct., 2022

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Heritage Days

Open House & 2 NEW Exhibits at Lincoln Center

Friday, September 8, 2022

10 am - 7 pm

Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead - 60 Years Celebration

Tours & Picnic Saturday, September 9, 2022

10 am - 6 pm



We often pose the questions: Can you name all 16 of your great-great grandparents? What did their daily lives look like? How did major historical events shape their character? This year, our goal for Heritage Days is to create a window into the past that is visible from multiple angles.



At the Lincoln Center.....

Our first feature exhibit focuses on **toys and games used by Beloit residents** throughout our town's long history. Guests will be able to see how toys and games have changed... or not changed over the last century. Our second new exhibit will cover **fashion in Beloit** throughout the years. This exhibit will feature textile items that can easily be changed periodically to both preserve the integrity of the items, as well as offer visitors a chance to see more of our great textile collection.

At Hanchett Bartlett Homestead....

This year marks the **60th anniversary of BHS acquiring the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead**. There is no entry fee but there is a \$5 suggested donation. Food will be available from some of Beloit's local food trucks so please join us for a picnic on the Homestead's beautiful grounds.



The first Inter-urban was operated from Rockford to Beloit in June, 1902. The fare was 40 cents. Service began in the city of Beloit in October of the same year after the wires were strung. The bankrupt Interurban ceased in October, 1930, due to the decrease in passengers because of the advent of the automobile. The building on the left was the location of McNeany's now occupied by The Gantry. In this photo the visible portion of the sign says **Bort, Bailey & Co.** and also lists carpets, silks, cloaks. The building to the right is **The Golden Eagle Clothing House**. Notice the hitching posts in front of the buildings. The wagon with a barrel in the back next to the Interurban car states **Pabst Beer Always Pure**.

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Since the name Beloit appears to have been invented here in Beloit, WI, I wondered how many other places in the US might share that name and then try to determine how and why "our name" was borrowed. To begin this quest, I did a search of the more than two million entries in the official US Geographical Names Index that revealed that in addition to Beloit, WI and South Beloit across the border in Illinois there are four other inhabited places that share our name and one Alaskan Glacier (which seems to be named for an association with Beloit College as it is surrounded by other glaciers named Milton, Ripon, Marquette, etc.)

In addition to our Beloit and South Beloit the inhabited places are:

- Beloit, Dallas County, Alabama
- Beloit, Lyons County, Iowa
- Beloit, Mitchell County, Kansas
- Beloit, Mahoning County, Ohio

We will start with the Village of Beloit in Mahoning County, Ohio. Situated about half-way diagonally between Canton and Youngstown in northeastern Ohio this village (population 1171 as of 2020 census) started out as a "wide place in the road" in Smith Township, which was organized in 1821 as part of Columbiana County until Mahoning County was formed in 1845.

The "wide place in the road" became known as Smithfield Station, when the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne and Chicago

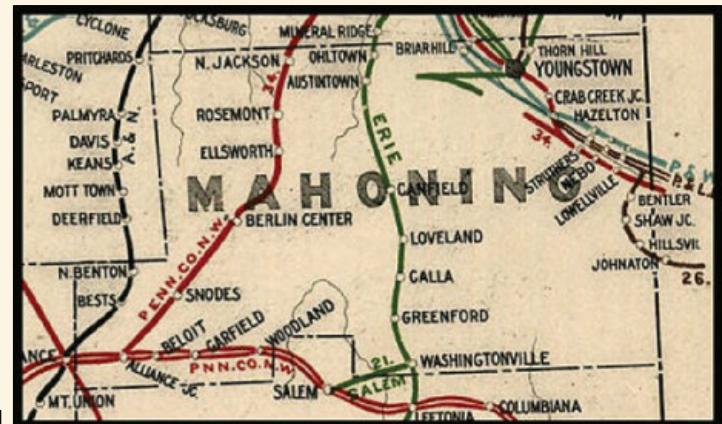
Railroad crossed that "wide place" in 1851. Unfortunately, it turns out that there was already a Smithfield Station in Jefferson County, Ohio and this ended up causing a great deal of confusion with mail delivery. So, A. S. Cassaday, the Postmaster at Mahoning's Smithfield Station, asked his fellow townsmen for suggestions of a new name. Over 100 names were suggested but apparently Cassaday picked Beloit, because he had a cousin who lived in Beloit, Wisconsin and he thought the name was short and easy to spell and so, Smithfield Station became Beloit, Ohio in 1863. That name was not official, however, until the railroad issued a declaration on May

21, 1868 that "On and after June 1, 1868, the station on this Railway now known as Smithfield, Ohio will be called BELOIT and so designated on timetables next issued." (*The Beloit Story 1863-1963*). And thus, was born Beloit, Ohio.

The above information was kindly provided to me by Ms. Thressa Haidet, Secretary/Treasurer of the Beloit Area Historical Society in Ohio.

Now a challenge to our readers – Can anyone determine who Cassaday's cousin living in Beloit in the early 1860s was? Some quick sleuthing on my part via Google and Ancestry reveal that his name is recorded as Abram (once Abraham) Scott CASSADAY. He was Born 6 Aug 1835 in Ohio and died 22 Oct 1910 in Ohio.

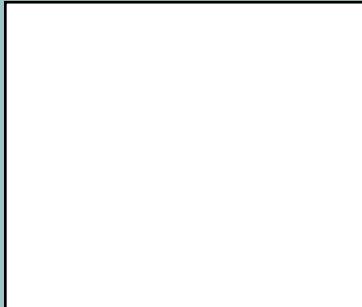
Stay tuned for more articles about the origins of the Beloits in Alabama, Iowa, and Kansas.



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First Means of Crossing Rock River

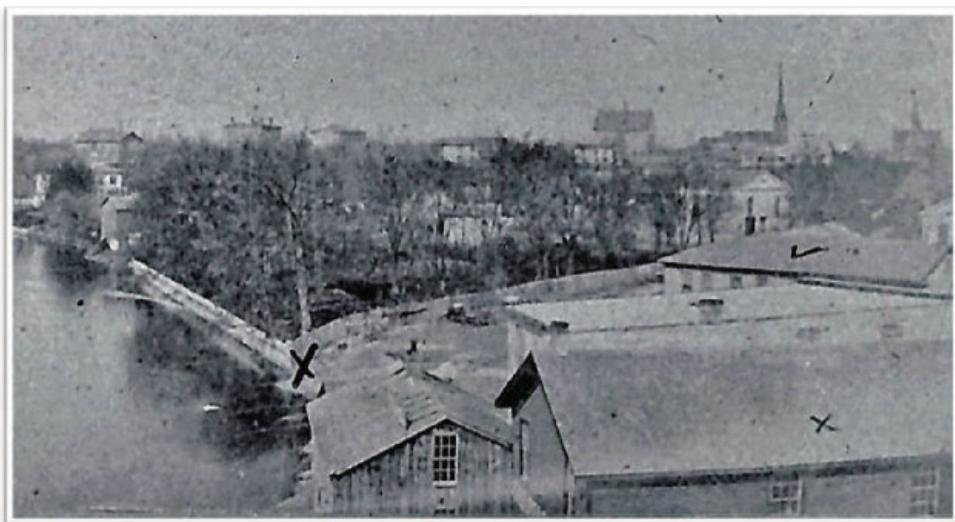
Getting across streams in the days before bridges were erected was no pleasant pastime. The bed of the stream had to be solid and not too deep if loaded wagons were to make a successful crossing.

Where the streams were deep, such as the Rock River was in the vicinity of Beloit, it was necessary to have ferry service. Dr. W.F. Brown, a Beloit historian, wrote about the operation of the ferry before the building of central bridge in 1842.

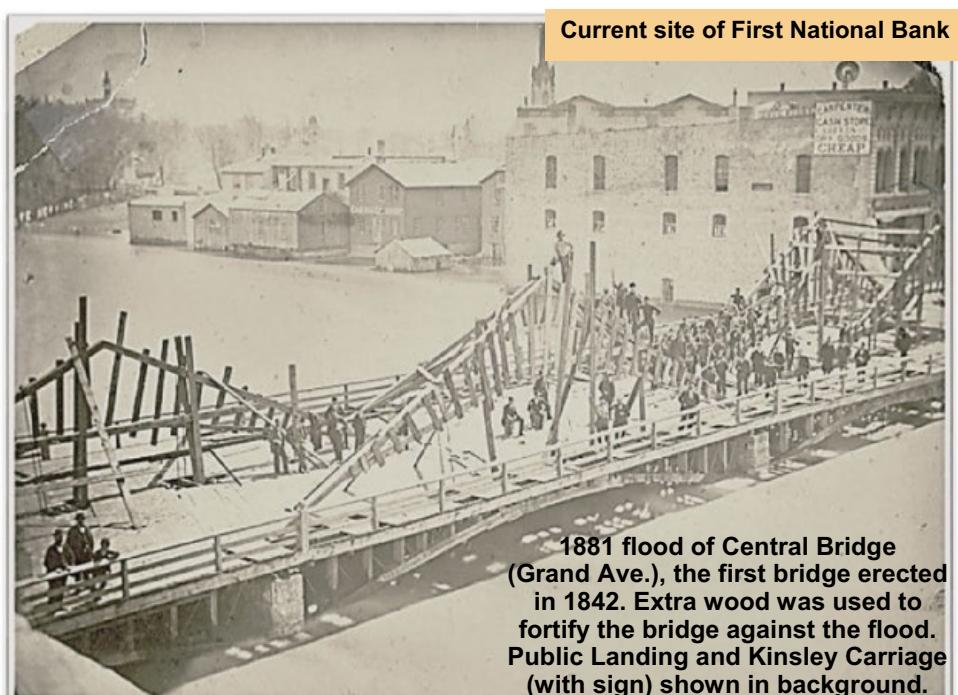
"A large tree, jutting out from the bank at the north end of the public landing, north side of Public Ave., held the east end of the ferry rope which was fastened at the other end to a similar tree on the west side of the river. The rectangular flat-bottomed ferry boat was attached at both ends to this rope by two similar arrangements of rope and pulley and grooved wheel, one for each end of the boat, both wheels moving easily on the long ferry rope and affording a kind of movable anchorage."

"When the west end attachment was shortened up, making that end of the scow diagonally upstream, the force of the current would slowly push the boat across to the west bank. Then after the wheel rope at the west end was lengthened and that of the other end shortened, causing the east end of the boat to point up stream, the current of the river flowing southward would gradually work the boat back to the east bank."

Central Bridge (right) was a private bridge built of wood. People had to pay a toll to cross. Many were afraid to use the bridge and walked their teams thru the river when the water was low.



The large X near the river shows the public landing at the end of Public Ave. The building with the check mark is the seminary and the building in the foreground with the small x is the roof of Kinsley Carriage Shop. College buildings are in the background.



1881 flood of Central Bridge (Grand Ave.), the first bridge erected in 1842. Extra wood was used to fortify the bridge against the flood. Public Landing and Kinsley Carriage (with sign) shown in background.

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Beloit Brewery operated by the Schlenk family

German immigrant George Schlenk brewed beer in Rockford beginning in 1863 and crossed state lines to ship it to Beloit. He founded the Beloit Brewery, 134 State Street, in 1875. Beloit had relatively few beer drinkers and lager and ale were preferred - ale being the most popular. The brewery averaged 350 barrels a year. Output at the turn of the century was about 1,500 barrels a year. Goods were shipped to Racine, Milwaukee and other cities.

George was in financial trouble by the early 1880s, and the brewery was placed in the name of his wife Augustina. The sons, William and Frank, worked in the brewery. Around 1898 she turned over the brewery to her younger son Frank (Franz). The brewery provided the majority of ale and porter used in Beloit and vicinity. Franz had been running the operation since 1891 when he made news for selling beer without a license. (He was acquitted on the grounds that the prosecution could not prove that the bottles contained beer.)

The Schlenk Brewery closed around 1915.



1918 View of the lower part of State Street looking Northwest
Schlenk (Beloit Brewery) is the red building on lower left

Question: This marker currently located by the Rotary River Center tells us that Private Abraham Lincoln camped overnight in Beloit when he was in the army during the Black Hawk War. For many years this boulder was at the corner of Lawton and Pleasant. Neither of these places was the actual campsite. Where did he camp?



ANSWER: Ranger Lincoln was a member in Gen. Atkinson's army in pursuit of Blackhawk. On June 27, 1832, Lincoln and his rangers left Dixon and crossed into Wisconsin a mile east of Tulite village about where Strong Stadium is now located. They traveled across (Tulite) until they arrived at their campground at the intersections of Park Ave. and White Ave. The campground spread north to Kelleer. The next day they continued their pursuit along the river towards Koskronong. Twenty seven years later, Lincoln was in Beloit to give a speech (Oct. 1, 1859). On his way for an engagement in Janesville, he asked to be driven to the east of the city and travel the upper road. According to newspaper accounts, on that trip he located this spot and related the story of his overnight stay.

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A Photographic History of the Demolition of Lincoln Junior High School

The Beloit Historical Society has existed since 1910. Most of that time, we were housed in various city owned buildings like the old City Hall. However, by the mid 1980s we moved from the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead into our current location, the former Lincoln Junior High School. Recently, a collection of photographs was donated to us by Arlene Peterson. Her husband Peter Peterson had been a school principal in Beloit for many years. The photographs depict the 1988-1989 demolition of the majority of the Lincoln Junior High. Before it was renovated into what it is today, this building stood multiple stories tall and more closely resembled the closed, but still standing, Roosevelt Junior High School on the east side of the river. Thousands of Beloit residents received a portion of their education or found employment within the walls of Lincoln Junior High School. Many members of our community light up when given the opportunity to explore long-forgotten parts of their former middle school that remind them of days past.

This addition to our collection which contains a number of other photos, will provide insight from a new perspective, as we now have a chance to watch our home-base change before our eyes in full color.



Prior to this donation, the photos we have of the demolition, while professionally done, were taken with black and white film. The level of detail discernible in this new addition is tremendous. One of the more interesting photos from the new donation [shown at left] depicts the challenge faced by the Historical Society as we continued to operate during demolition. If you are interested in seeing the rest of this donation, come visit us at Lincoln Center.

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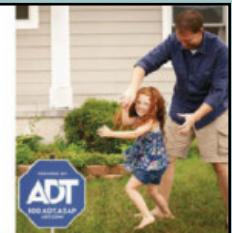
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Wow! Were news items reported differently in March, 1867

(Beware: English teachers will go crazy with missing punctuation and run-on sentences)

Theft in Rice's Saloon— Nearly \$400 in Value Taken

Mr. Rice who keeps the liquor saloon at the stand adjacent to Young's Leather Store—being one of the city's licentiates—and lodges in his saloon, found on getting up on Wednesday morning that his pants which he has been accustomed to keep under his pillow had been removed during the night and carried to the other end of the store, a wallet (containing some \$40) abstracted and also the key of his safe. The safe had also been opened and \$175 in money together with some notes had been taken out and the key left in the safe door. A valuable gold watch and chain had also been taken from Mr. R's vest which was hanging near his bed. The money and the watch stolen he values at something over \$375. The front door was found partly open and the key in the door where Mr. R. had left it the night before.

No doubt is entertained by Mr. R. that the thief came into the store and secreted himself during the evening (the back room of the store furnishing excellent hiding places) and when the proprietor had retired and fallen asleep the thief emerged from his lurking place, appropriated the precious booty and made off with it. There are no indications about the doors or windows or burglarious attempts to enter, though the new fallen snow showed that somebody had made an egress from the store during the night in a pair of boots which exactly match with a certain pair worn by somebody not very far off. From the emphasis with which this coincidence is stated we infer that suspicion points in some definite direction.

During 1907 all contagious health cases were confined in a wooden shack along Turtle Creek aptly called the "pest house". It was to this building that all medical cases requiring quarantine were to be housed and cared for in order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Just prior to WWI Beloit's first health officer was appointed and it was his decision that the "pest house" be discontinued and cases treated in the more modern hospitals and at the homes of the individuals where possible. Measles, mumps, whooping cough, scarlet fever, chicken pox, small pox, and diphtheria along with typhoid fever were made into signs and placed on the resident's housing when the disease was diagnosed by the family physician. These signs were in various colors so as to be visible from the street. Visitors were forbidden from entering until the signs were removed by the health officer.

Later tuberculosis and poliomyelitis were quarantined and considered on the same scale as the other communicable diseases. With the advent of preventative medicine, modern hospitalization and vaccines, quarantine signs were discontinued.



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Message from Executive Director, Donna Langford



It has been an amazing summer and as I predicted in the last issue, it did go by quickly! Three interns contribute a total of 80 hours per week for 10 weeks as they worked on various collections projects. We also welcomed **nine new volunteers** since last spring, all of whom join the staff at the Lincoln Center 1-2 days every week. We received help with mailings, event planning and especially collections projects. Each volunteer was able to work with their favorite material whether it was photographic, textile or military items. It was exciting to share the enthusiasm as they made new discoveries with objects in the collections.

The results of the summer projects increased preservation of historic items, increased accessibility by the public to these items and provided more information through research about the items. Milestones were also achieved this summer with 100% of the hanging garment storage being photographed. This included over 500 dresses, suit jackets, coats and shirts that are sturdy enough to be stored on padded hangars. The photography of these items provides a condition record for each item and a visual description for researchers. Another major milestone that was achieved was **Archivist Leith Rohr** reaching 100 square feet of archival material being cataloged with finding aides for researchers to understand the content of our collections. The majority of this archival material was for 25 different women's organizations providing greater knowledge about each of the groups and their roles within the Beloit community. With the approach of fall, staff is reaching towards new milestones.

Please join us during the Heritage Days weekend Sept 9 -11 at Lincoln Center and the Hanchett-Bartlett properties.

Thank you Nicolette for your service!

The Board of Directors and staff thank **Nicolette Meister** for her dedication and service on the board. She served two consecutive full terms, a total of six years, as a board director, vice-president and chair of the Collections committee, providing her wise council and assistance. She was instrumental in having a collections condition assessment conducted which has been invaluable in helping us to establish collections priorities and get additional grants to address those priorities. She spent time and effort to create a **Collections Management Policy** which sets standards in procedures. This policy is available on the BHS website <http://beloithistoricalsociety.com/collectionsmanagementpolicy.php> and has been requested by other organizations to be used as a template for their own policies - a very high honor.



Nicolette saw opportunities at the Beloit Historical Society which would benefit her museum studies students. She oversaw multiple projects that resulted in inventories of the toy, textile and military collections and upgraded shelving conditions for those items. These projects greatly benefited the collections while providing wonderful learning experiences for aspiring museum professionals.



Nicolette (far right) with her museum studies students in 2018. Rick Dexter, BHS President, on left.



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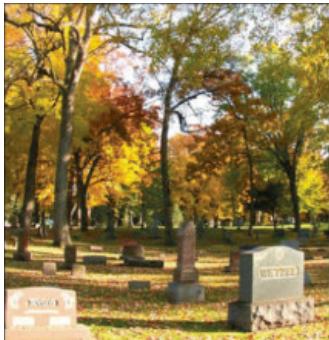
**Come to Heritage Days
"Fashion in Beloit" Exhibit at the Lincoln Center
Friday, September 9th
10 am - 7 pm**

This dress was worn by Pearle Lewis Johnson for her graduation ceremony at Beloit High School in 1901. Pearle donated the dress to BHS in 1965.

**HERITAGE DAYS CEMETERY WALK
Saturday, Sept. 10,
10:00 a.m.**

The City of Beloit Parks and Recreation Department along with BHS invite you to attend a walking tour of historic Oakwood Cemetery led by **John Kalkritz**. Meet at the front steps of the chapel.

Reservations must be made by Tuesday, Sept. 6. Call 608-364-2890 to reserve your spot.



BEHIND THE SCENES by Jesse Herscher

Here at the Beloit Historical Society, we are making great strides making our collection more accessible to our members and to the general public. One of the best ways of doing this is through the digitization of materials. **Volunteer Norma Saxon**, with the help of interns Kiersten and Paige, has been in charge of photographing and reorganizing our textile storage. Since starting in April, Norma has been able to rehouse our collections of lace, handkerchiefs and jewelry. The largest project she assisted us with is the hanging garment storage. Now 100% photographed, we will soon have a detailed digital record of the largest section of our textile collection. The hanging storage consists of over 300 ballroom gowns, wedding dresses, casual dresses, vests, jackets, kimonos, military and other uniforms and much more. Our plan is to create a digital archive that will streamline our process of locating and identifying items in the collection, as well as offer a simpler way for our members and researchers to view some of the spectacular pieces housed in our textile room. **None of this could be done without volunteers like Norma and so many others at BHS. Thanks to all of you!**



Summer interns Katie Kraemer (on left in white), Kiersten Faldet, Paige Clark and volunteer Norma Saxon (on right) rehousing our jewelry collection



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MEET OUR THIRD SUMMER INTERN



Katie Kraemer

I am one of three student interns employed at the Historical Society this summer. I am a rising sophomore at Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan, but I was born and raised in Beloit. I am planning on pursuing a double major in Religious Studies and History and chose to intern with the Historical Society due to my hopes of working in archives or museums for my career.

My summer project is an educational outreach program in the form of a Traveling Trunk that includes examples of historical artifacts, photographs, documents, and interactive activities that engage with Wisconsin's State learning standards. The overarching theme of the Trunk is "Fads and Fashions" and explores continuity and change over time as it pertains to these subjects. The intended message of this project explores relevant examples from Beloit's own local history to help kids understand a wide variety of historical thinking skills. **Rachel Wilson** (new volunteer at BHS) and I are focusing on elements of economics, history, and geography, all relating to Beloit's own Freeman Shoe Co.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

The dedicated support from our volunteers allows us to achieve bigger and better things. From collection's management to digitization, new exhibits, mailings, outreach, events and this newsletter, the volunteers do it all. They are the heart and soul of BHS. Recently, we went to the Hanchett-Bartlett homestead to give our volunteers a chance to take a private tour and enjoy a barbecue on the homestead's tranquil landscape. Twenty-four people attended the event. We had brats, hot dogs and fresh burgers from the **local butcher shop Pinnons**, cooked on charcoal grills out in the sunshine. Spending the time to appreciate the hard work the volunteers put in is always worth it. We built stronger connections with each other and those who volunteer on different days finally got the chance to meet in person. We talked about history, told jokes, and shared ideas. It was a lovely day.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS!

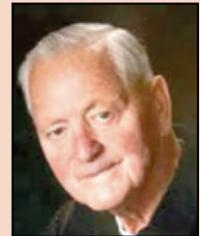
Welcome New Members

Jacqueline Finegan

Mary Wong Palmer

Families Remember Their Loved Ones
With Donations to Beloit Historical Society

The family of **Bill and Jackie Landers** has given BHS a memorial gift in honor of their parents. Jackie passed away 4/24/2018 and Bill on 3/31/2022. The Landers were long-time



loyal members. Jackie donated time and effort through many volunteer activities over many years. We are very appreciative of their thoughtfulness.



Carolyn Rose, wife of Noble Rose, passed away 7/28/2022 in Green Valley, Arizona. She and her husband were each very active in Beloit for many years and were steadfast members of BHS. Her family has designated Beloit Historical Society to receive memorial contributions in their mother's name just as they had done for their father. We will designate the funds for a project which aligns with Carolyn's interests. We thank the family and appreciate their generosity.

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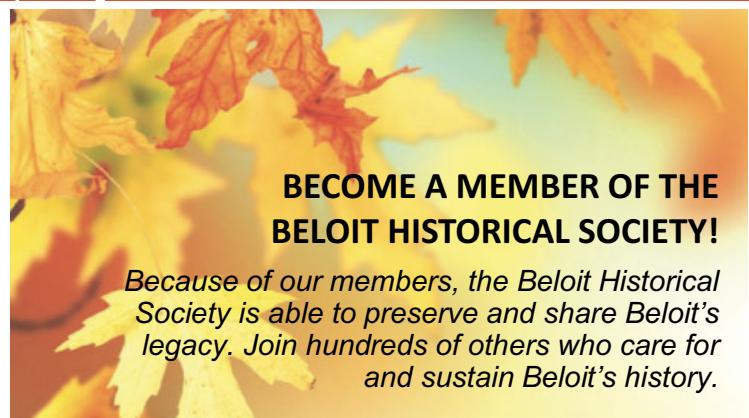


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Beloit had at least two breweries during the 1800s.

Beloit City Brewery was run by Bernard Cunningham from a plant on the north side of Liberty Avenue near Fourth Street.

George J. Schlenk founded the Beloit Brewery at 134 State Street. The plant was later run by his son Frank.

See the story of the Schlenk Brewery on page 5.

Beloit Historical Society Sustaining Memberships

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Joe and Ann Chamberlain
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W. Richard Gerhard
Joyce Haight (Jim deceased 4/22)
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Bold denotes new member