and again wrecked the mill. Dan Whetstone was badly injured and was carried home on a stretcher, but finally recovered. Then again in about 1890 the mill caught fire from burning straw ignited by sparks from the switch engine and burned down, but was rebuilt. In 1899 the S. E. Barrett Paper Company of Chicago bought the mill and for many years it was operated by E. J. Adams as manager.

It must have been in this period that the No. 2 Rock River mill was sold to the Barrett company, as the No. 2 mill was dismantled and only a portion of it now remains, and in 1910 Fred Coons bought an interest and remained associated with Mr. Fisher until 1926 when he sold his stock back to Mr. Mr. Fisher. Fred Coons was an old time papermaker, having for many years previously operated the Rockton mill.

In the sixties the principal shops on the water power outside of the paper mills were the Parker & Stone Reaper Company, and the O. E. Merrill & Company foundry and machine shop.

Parker & Stone was considered a big shop in those days, and put out about 800 reapers and mowers a year. The foundry was on a lot where the north end of the Besly building is. The machine shop was a frame structure on the east side of Second Street. The paint shop was west of Third Street, where the Beloit Lumber Company is now located. The office faced on Third Street. Mr. Kettlewell was superintendent. It was in the Parker & Stone reaper shop that George Appleby invented the twine binder in 1880. He became nationally known and his knotter is still in use on all harvesting machinery. This invention brought about the removal of the Parker & Stone Company to Milwaukee in about 1881 or 82. The firm was known as Parker & Dennett. The next year L. Holden Parker sold out his interest for $50,000 and built the Second National Bank Building. His father, Charles H. Parker, was president of the bank.

While on this subject of reapers, I might give my readers a short history of the development of the reaper industry. The first reaping machine was invented by Cyrus H. McCormick. It consisted of a sickle and sickle bar to cut the grain. At first the grain as cut fell on the platform and a second man on the machine had to rake it off. The next improvement was the self-rake reaper, doing away with the raker. Then the hand binder came along where the grain was elevated to a table and the sheaves bound by hand by the man standing in a cage on the machine. This was called a harvester. The final step was the invention of the self-binder by George Appleby in 1880. Now combines have come into general use where the grain is harvested and threshed at one operation and the wheat or other grain delivered into the wagon or truck.

The O. E. Merrill & Company business was started in the fifties and their foundry and machine shop was located where the C. H. Besly shop now stands. They did general machine shop work and later started in to build paper mill machines. About 1869 they took a contract to build one hundred “velocipedes,” a two wheel contraption, the forerunner of the bicycle, which came much later. The velocipede was heavy and clumsy and as it did not have ball bearings, it rode hard. The young men used to ride them up and down the sidewalks, but they never became popular.

In 1873 the Merrill firm incorporated under the name Merrill & Houston Iron Works and took up the manufacture of the Houston turbine water wheel. C. F. G. Collins was made general manager.

Chapter 17

Across the street from the Parker & Stone machine shop was the small shop of Barr & Cox, who manufactured hand hammers. They remained in business only a few years and quit. Barr lived next door to us on Third street. Just north of Parker & Stone was the big Blodgett stone mill. This mill made a specialty of
grinding rye flour. We boys would go into the mill and watch the millers sharpen the grooves in the stone grinding discs. The mill burned in 1898 and was not rebuilt. Frank Blodgett went to Janesville and took over a mill up there and is still living.

Next to the Blodgett mill was the Bishopp frame mill which no longer exists. It was dismantled and torn down not many years ago.

Next came the Gaston Scale Works, the oldest shop on the water power. The Gaston Scale Works were in business for many years but never seemed to grow in size. It is now out of business.

Next to Gaston's was the Gray and McDonald sash door and blind factory and general planing mill shop. Mr. Gray lived at the corner of Bluff and Roosevelt and has long been dead. His daughter, Mrs. Fluekiger, and her husband still live in the old homestead.

After Mr. Gray died, W. D. Kenzie took over the factory and ran it for several years. Later still Mr Warner, father of Arthur and Charlie Warner, occupied the building as a pattern shop.

In 1876 R. J. Dowd came to Beloit from Lee, Mass., and established the Dowd Knife Works. This company is still running at their shop located on the site of the Gray planing mill. The Young Manufacturing Company also occupied a part of the old factory.

Way back in 1868 or 69 a company was formed to start a woolen factory. They built a nice three story stone building just north of the Young Manufacturing Company shop but the venture was not successful, and later on given up.

* * *

Shortly after that C. B. Salmon, William H. Wheeler, E. P. Salmon, and George Sparks started in the manufacture of the Eclipse wind mill. This mill was an invention of Mr. Wheeler's father, who for many years was a missionary to the Ojibway tribe of Indians near Ashland, Wis. The Wheelers were born there and learned to speak the Ojibway Indian language as they were in constant touch with the Indian children. Mr. Wheeler used to relate many amusing stories about meeting Indians here and there in later years, and seeing their look of surprise that he could speak to them in their native language.

Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Salmon opened their business in the idle woolen factory building and continued there until they built their new factory in 1875 down on St. Paul avenue. There they added building railroad water tanks and pumps to their business. In 1876 they exhibited the Eclipse wind mill at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. All the windmill exhibits were mounted on towers out on the grounds, and the story is that one night a violent wind storm came up, and every windmill was blown down except the Eclipse, which was running the next day at a merry clip, having weathered the storm. This must have been a great feather in their cap, and the best possible advertisement. They secured first prize.

In 1882 the Beloit Wagon Works was organized by five men—Nelson Chamberlin, R. K. Felt, Professor William H. Beach, J. M. Cobb and John Thompson. They built and equipped a factory up on the old fair grounds, and began the manufacture of farm wagons. However, their capital was too small. In those days the manufacture of wagons was a big business, and required big capital. The Wagon Works failed, and the stockholders lost their money.

After Wheeler and Salmon left the woolen mill it was taken over by Fred Houston and C. P. Whittford, who converted it into a roller flouring mill. Their best brand of flour was called the "None Such" and their cheaper grade the "Economy" brand. After Whittford and Houston failed, the mill was taken over and operated by the Salmon Milling Company up to 1903 when the mill burned down.

Along about 1868-69 and 70 there was a shoe factory down in the lower end of State Street. It was named the Libby Shoe company. I knew a neighbor of ours when living down on 3rd street who worked in this factory. How big it was I don't know, and it did not continue for very long in business. I believe it was later
bought by or merged with the John Foster Shoe company about 1870, and they took up quarters in the big wooden "hotel" building in Cross street alongside the Chicago Northwestern Railroad line. In 1876 the Foster Shoe company moved to the Eclipse Wind Engine plant in St. Paul avenue when Mr. Wheeler moved up on the hill. The Foster Shoe company specialized in making the finest ladies shoes in the United States, and sold their products in the big cities like Chicago, New York and even in Boston. It was said the first lady in the land always wore Foster shoes.

The Freeman Shoe Company now owns and operates a factory in the old Foster plant located in St. Paul avenue.

* * *

When the Chicago and North Western built the red brick depot on the west side at Grand avenue, a man by the name of Bill Smith conceived the idea of building a big three story frame building alongside the depot platform, which he called a "hotel." His idea was to have a railroad eating house, where passenger trains could stop for meals. But the railroad company vetoed the idea and the "hotel" was a fizzle.

The building then became used for other purposes. As stated above the John Foster Shoe factory occupied it for some years before they moved to St. Paul avenue. Then the Rosenblatt overall factory until they moved up to Fourth street. Finally Tom Purves bought the building and ran his cigar factory there. He finally sold it to the North Western when they built their new passenger station in 1900, and the building was removed.

In the same period W. D. Kenzie operated a planing mill in a building just south of Smith's Hotel. When the new North Western station was built this planing mill was torn down.

Up north of the switch track in Roosevelt was a big frame building used by Patsey Cramen for a tobacco warehouse. Later there was a small gas engine shop owned by George Cram and a partner, Mr. Beebe, but this did not continue very long. Now the land is owned by the Yates Machine Company.

In 1865 in an old stone building at the corner of Third and Grand where Kaplan's furniture store is located was a soap factory. It was a smelly place, and ran for many years. Later Oscar Omstead manufactured drive well points in this building until he moved to Chicago. Then it was occupied by Holcomb Brothers, plumbers. Mr. Holcomb put in the plumbing in our house at 643 Bluff Street where it was built in 1894. He was a good mechanic, and at one time announced that he had invented a new type rotary steam engine. He expected to make a million, but nothing ever came out of it.

Just north of the soap factory building Gesley Brothers, Saber and Torris, in 1881 built a shop to manufacture the Gesley cultivator. They ran it for two or three years and quit. After that it was used by Gesley and Millett as a farm implement establishment. Gesley and Millett have both passed away.

At the corner of Third and St. Lawrence there was in the seventies and early eighties, a small machine shop, operated for a time by George Summers, a machinist, and later on by J. C. McGvoy, a well known man in the community. The land is now a part of the Yates-American holdings.

One of the most interesting places to us children was the Cooper shop on Third street, which stood where the Jorgenson shop now stands. This shop was operated by the Perry family, Mr. Perry, the father, his sons, Ab and Fred. Ab Perry, is still living the last surviving member of the G.A.R. Fred Perry was a classmate of mine at old No. 2 school, and passed away many years ago.

It is no small art to make a flour barrel, or any other kind of barrel. The staves have to be shaved to the proper taper, the heads fitted in, the hoops driven down tight, and the whole thing made perfectly water tight. I used to wonder as I watched them at their work, how they could do it so fast and so easily. The Perry shop made all the barrels for the Blodgett flour mill, and I suppose for other customers as well.