Professor Kehl. Both of these dancing masters were exceedingly courteous and polished after the French manner. When the theater was remodeled, the third floor was removed to make room for the balconies.

Recalls Coming of Telephone

The Bell Telephone company reached Beloit in 1883. The first switch board was installed in the American Express office, then located in the Goodwin Block. George Anderson was the express agent, and Ben Oliver was his assistant. Ben had charge of the switch board. American Express had number "one." Our office had number 73.

The poles were placed along the streets and hundreds of wires strung. I recall we all felt quite metropolitan and cityfied to see these poles and wires the same as in Chicago and Milwaukee, but some years later they were pronounced a fire hazard and unsightly so were removed and cables laid underground.

The first telephones were of the wall type. To converse you had to stand in front of the phone. You had to turn a crank to call "central." Later portable desk sets came into use, and now the cradle phones are in use.

In 1891 Oliver became general manager, and moved the office upstairs into the building at the northwest corner of State and Broad, later occupied by the Elks.

In 1901 the office was moved to a location upstairs above the Charlie Smith Drug Store, now Goldberg's store.

The Bell Telephone building in East Grand avenue was erected in 1910.

Chapter 23

Since 1839, Beloit has had 18 postmasters. Postmasterships are traditionally looked upon as a reward for political work and to a great extent are considered a sinecure. In years gone by the postmaster would have his private business and practically turn over all his duties at the post office to the first assistant. However, our present postmaster, John Riordan, a native son of Beloit, is always to be found in his office.

The present post office first section was built in 1912, and enlarged in 1931. City delivery of mail was inaugurated July 1, 1890.

Beloit Had 30 Mayors

From 1856 to 1929 Beloit has been served by 30 mayors. Some of them held office for more than one term. They were all good and able men. Perhaps as the most outstanding man in the mayors' chain, John Hackett, might be rated. He was the son-in-law of Caleb Blodgett, and was Beloit's first postmaster. He built the first house on the west side of the river in 1842. He died in 1886.

Since 1929, we have had five city managers, H. G. Otis, Palmer Hamilton, Blaine Hansen, George Ingersoll and A. D. Telfer.

How many citizens of Beloit can we select who have achieved more than local fame, men who have gone out in the world and have done big things?

I believe everybody will agree that the following names should be placed on the honor roll, and there may be others, too, but I cannot place them.


Invented Twine Binder

Beloit is also noted for several famous inventions. In 1880 George Appleby invented the twine binder. In the nineties, a young Beloit man, a son of R. K. Felt, went to Chicago and invented the compometer, which is in use in all offices requiring quick and accurate mathematical computations. It was the forerunner of the modern adding machines. About the same time, A. P. and Charlie Warner invented the Warner speedometer,
a modified type of which is now used on all cars. J. M. Cobb back in the seventies or eighties invented a process of saturating strawboard building paper with tar or resin. Louis Phelan is also a Beloit man, who invented electric regulating devices.

The Beloit Municipal hospital was opened in 1928. This hospital has been one of the most successful institutions established in our midst. It was preceded by three private hospitals which had done good work in former years. These were the H. P. Strong Emergency hospital on the 3rd floor of the old building, corner State and Grand where the Strong Block now stands. Dr. Helm's hospital in the old remodeled Presbyterian church building, corner Broad and Pleasant and the Beloit General hospital on the corner of Broad and Park ave. These were all discontinued when the new hospital was opened. The Municipal hospital is open to all established doctors and surgeons in the city on equal terms.

One thing that interests me more than anything else about the hospital is the great number of baby cases. Babies galore are born there. Every night I read the hospital report in the Daily News and by far the greatest number of cases are maternity cases. Expectant mothers now more and more go to the hospital where they can get the best possible care with all the facilities of the best obstetrical practice. The record of successful births is very fine.

Medical Science Makes Strides

Medical science has made great strides during the last 50 years in safeguarding the health of the public by eliminating the hazards of infections due to impure water and milk.

The State Board of Health has established and continues to maintain a cooperative health laboratory in seven key cities of the state. One of these laboratories is located in Beloit with a resident technician in charge. The office is in the Municipal hospital. In these laboratories samples of water and milk are sent in from all the communities in each district for analysis to check the bacteria content and so insure the public from infection.

The laboratories also provide the doctors with free tests of blood counts, urine analysis and other tests. This work is of immense importance to all of us.

Now compare this service with conditions as they were 50 years ago, the noisome toilets, the dirty, unsanitary stables, the unsafe wells and the risky raw milk supply.

The Old Milk Man

The old milk man! Do you remember him? His wagon would drive up to your front door. He would ring a bell and if you wanted milk you would go out with a container and get a quart or more. He would pour the milk from a five gallon can. If you were lucky and got the top, you would get the richer milk, but if his can were nearly empty you would get pretty thin milk.

Every housewife used a strainer to take out dirt and refuse. There was no pasteurizing in those days. It is a wonder we are still alive. The modern, sanitary dairies cannot be too highly appreciated from the standpoint of cleanliness and good health.

Cemetery Platted in Early Day

The original section of Oakwood cemetery was platted in an early day and owned by the city. In so many cities throughout the country today, the cemetery is owned by a cemetery corporation and run for profit. Such a system has always seemed to me to be almost sacriligious, to want to make money out of burying the dead.

When I was a child living down on Third street, the cemetery seemed far away out in the country, and so in truth it was, but now 70 years later, it is inside property. The city has spread out so far and grown all around it that it no longer seems outside of our ken.

Gradually in the course of time the cemetery filled up. No more burial lots were available, and the need arose for more room, either an addition to the old cemetery or a new site. Quite an argument arose about this. Some advocated a new site and move all the graves away from the old, but this touched the hearts of all who had near and dear ones resting there. The proposal to move the cemetery was abandoned.
So in 1885 the Strong family who had many ties holding them to the old cemetery gave the city a large tract of land adjoining the old cemetery to the east, and dedicated it as a place of burial. It became known as the Strong addition and has become a very lovely cemetery. But the city continued to grow and in the course of 25 to 30 years more, the Strong addition was all preempted. So in 1919 the city bought land east of town for a new cemetery, which was named Eastlawn. This has also been developed and beautified in the past 20 years.

The Catholic people of the community also have a cemetery of their own named the Calvary. It is situated just east of the city cemetery.

Chapter 24

When the original plot of the city was made in 1840 the land now known as Horace White Park, was left open, and dedicated to the public for a city park. Today it is a beautiful spot and very central.

Mechanics’ Green has an interesting tale. Ever since an early day, this piece of ground has been lying there, apparently unowned and unclaimed by anybody. The taxes had not been paid for years, and the city claimed it had reverted to the public and was now owned by the city. At any rate the title to the land was clouded, and nobody seemed to know who really were the legal owners. Several law suits were started by claimants at various times, but never sustained by the courts. Finally in 1915, the city obtained undisputed title and it is now one of our city parks. The name “Mechanic’s Green” has been applied to it as far back as I can remember.

Other Property Bought

The Field property on West Grand avenue was bought by the city in 1927 for $27,500 to be used for a park. The big Field house was removed, and now it is a very beautiful spot.

Vernon Avenue playground was bought in 1920 for $10,000.

Hinckley Field was bought in 1919 for $3,200.

Summit Avenue playground was bought in 1927 for $7,500.

Municipal Golf Course was acquired from various owners in the years 1920 to 1927. Adjoining the golf course is the new Municipal Swimming pool, built by W. P. A. workers. It is a fine piece of work. All the surroundingings of the pool have been landscaped and beautified and there are some clever stunts in stone work, notably the map of Wisconsin, the fountain, and other nice ideas. I have recently been up to see the new developments on the high ground north of the pool. The bowling green, tennis courts, and parking spaces are fine. Trees and shrubbery have been set out, and the whole layout is remarkably good. I doubt if any city in the whole country has anything to equal it for beauty and uniqueness. The entire combination of the golf course, the swimming pool and amphitheatre with the new improvements and landscaping north of the pool, makes a very fine ensemble, and we owe it all to the good work done by the W.P.A. We would never have had all these fine things if it had not been for the W.P.A. workers and due credit should be given to them.

Riverside park also was developed by W.P.A. labor in the years of the depression and is now a great credit to the city. The field house, lagoon and landscaping of trees and shrubbery is very fine. It is a beautiful approach to the city from the north. The view of the river is also very fine.

Donates Land to City

A few years ago in 1921, Dr. Leeson donated to the city a tract of land east of the city to be used for park purposes. Some work has already been done on this land.

The city hall parking site was bought by the city fathers from Nellie King Smith in the years from 1916 to 1936 at a price of $25,000 for one piece, $60,000 for