

and my mother patronized her for new bonnets. In those days making over last years hats was the customary thing to do. The Smith house is still there, near the corner of Portland and Fifth.

How many people in Beloit today know that at one time we had a steamboat service on Rock river? Sometime in the early eighties Captain Berg owned and ran a steamboat on the river. He lived near where the Portland avenue bridge now is, and the city terminus for his boat was right there. He made daily trips up to the Big Hill and back. His boat line was very popular for picnic parties and moonlight rides on the water.

Another vivid recollection was the burning of the paper mill straw stacks in 1868 or 69 or there-

abouts. That summer we had had some very severe electrical storms and frequent lightning strokes. One night we were awakened by the loud blowing of the paper mill whistle to sound the alarm and summon the fire department. Lightning had struck one of the big straw stacks and set it afire. The volunteer fire department got there as quickly as possible and by hard work succeeded in putting out the fire, or so they thought. But the next afternoon it broke out again and the whistle sounded, but it was no use. This time it got away from them and all the stacks burned. There were a large number, ten or twelve. The fire kept burning and smouldering for weeks thereafter. It must have been a big loss to the Rock River Paper company.

Chapter 4

I will now relate some episodes that happened in those early days of our town.

After the war there were several hundred veterans back home, living here in the city. Every year we had a Fourth of July celebration with a parade, city band, firemen, fife and drum corps and floats, old soldiers, a big brass cannon, etc. The brass cannon was a piece of Spanish artillery cast in Spain, covered with Spanish inscriptions and date. I think it was an eight pounder.

One Fourth, in the late sixties, Hugh Riley, a war artillery man, had the cannon placed in Bridge st. (now West Grand ave.) with the muzzle pointing up Third st. They were firing salutes, using grass to ram in the charge, and Hugh was the chief gunner. I remember my father and several other men were standing in the street in front of his shop. I was also there watching the firing.

Suddenly while Riley was ramming in the charge after a number of salutes had been fired and the cannon was hot, the man with his thumb on the primer let go and the gun went off. The ram rod broke Riley's arm and he was terribly burned on his face and chest. He was quickly picked up and carried into John Kline's sa-

loon. They feared his sight was gone, but he recovered and lived many years thereafter. The ram rod was shot up Third st. and went through a board sign in front of our shop, just over the heads of where we were standing. It was a close shave.

Some years later at a Fourth of July celebration, the old cannon exploded and was blown to pieces, but luckily no one was hit.

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Two other reminiscences of the old happenings may be of interest to old timers. One incident was the circus riot which occurred in the spring of 1875. The Burr Robins circus was showing in Beloit. Their tents were pitched on the lot on Shirland ave., where the gas works are now located. In those days we had a lot of toughs around town who were always looking for trouble, and circus people were a tough lot too. In some way, I don't know how, a squabble arose which soon led into a general all-around fight. The police were called and City Marshal Janvrin appeared on the scene to restore order. But he could not singlehanded handle the mob. Reports were that he was hit on the head by a club in the hands of Pat Ford, a circus man,

and so badly injured he died in two or three weeks. Pat Ford was chased all over town, but finally managed to get across the line into Illinois. He was later arrested.

I will also relate another circus occurrence which happened some seven or eight years prior to the Burr Robins circus riot.

In the sixties there were no houses on the high ground south of what is now Highland ave. (at that time called Farm st.). It was all open prairie, and circus shows used to pitch their tents out on this open space. One night when the performance was going on, a violent storm blew up, thunder, lightning, and wind. The tent collapsed and blew down. The lights went out, the animals roared, and pandemonium followed. The crowd was panic stricken. I don't recall that anyone was killed, but we can imagine what a mess it was to get out of. Everybody was drenched to the skin. It was fortunate that it was no worse.



In 1885 or 86 we had the memorable Salvation Army riot.

When the Salvationists first entered Beloit to rescue the city from the devil, they took up their quarters in the old skating rink opposite the C. & N.W. depot, and commenced to march through the streets with banners and drums, and sing any pray on the street corners. They were not at all popular. People did not like it. One night at the corner of State and East Grand ave., somebody started a disturbance upon the Salvationists, who ran for their lives.

In the midst of the tumult, Mayor Charlie Parker appeared and in

the name of the law commanded the crowd to disperse. Someone threw a pebble or stone which struck the mayor, but no harm done. The big drum was smashed and other knocks inflicted. For weeks after the fracas, the current question was "Who hit the mayor?" or "Who kicked the drum?" The general verdict was that Phil Gleason kicked the drum and no one ever knew who hit the mayor. Several arrests followed. Some pleaded guilty and paid a fine for disturbing the peace.

On October 9, 1871, we received the news of the great Chicago fire. I was then in the grammar room and had the honor post of ringing the school bell in the belfry, for opening school and at recess. I remember when we heard of the big fire, I asked our teacher, Miss Amos, if I might climb the ladder up to the belfry to see the fire. She laughed and said, "No, the fire is too far away for you to see it from here." I wish to pay a passing tribute to our two splendid teachers—Miss Amos and Miss Hinman, who for many years, taught the grammar room of old No. 2. They were thorough teachers and strict disciplinarians and maintained good order at all times with a motley crowd of youngsters.

In 1869 the first high school was built on its present site. I remember one day Mr. Brittan, secretary of the school board, came up to No. 2 to show us the plans of the new building and how fine it was going to be. Professor Kerr was then the principal. He wore glasses and was an awe inspiring figure in our young eyes. It was a terrible thing to happen if an obstreperous boy was sent down to the high school with a note from his teacher.

Chapter 5

In 1873 our family moved from Third street up to our present location at 643 Bluff street. The William Adrich family owned the house on the corner where the Second Congregational church now stands, and the Durkee family owned the fine old stone house next to us on the south. Mr. Higley, the Congregational pastor,

owned the one story red brick house at the corner of Bluff and E street, which building still stands and is a lovely house to this day. The old Episcopal rectory was at the corner of Bridge street and Bluff street where the present rectory now stands. Dr. Royce lived there for 27 years.

All these families were fine