

Chapter 9

No house was considered complete unless it had a barn or stable for the horse, cow, and pig. There was also the very necessary adjunct—the outside toilet. People nowadays who live in commodious homes with modern bathrooms can't appreciate too highly the comforts they have compared with the hardships of the outside toilets in cold weather. Saturday nights we children were given our baths in a tub on the kitchen floor.

When I was about 10 years old it was my job to do the chores. I had to feed and water the horse, the cow and the pig, clean out the stable and milk the cow. After milking in the morning "bossie" was turned loose in the street to wander around to find grass to eat. All the west side cows usually found their way to the open prairies west of town where the grazing was good.

In the evening some cows were "good" and came home alone, but some were not so thoughtful, so we kids had to go out and hunt "bossie" up and bring her home, which at times was an exasperating job, as you could never tell just exactly where she could be found. This practice of letting the stock roam the streets was abandoned about 1870.

We boys also had to saw and split the wood for the kitchen range and pile it up in the woodshed. Nowadays, there is nothing for boys to do except to ride bicycles and go to the movies.

Along about 1869 John Bishopp, living on Fourth street close to No. 2 school, imported a herd of Shetland ponies from Scotland. I was told half of them died on the trip over the ocean, but something like 30 or 40 of them arrived in Beloit. We children found it very interesting to go down to watch the ponies. They were shaggy, little animals, 30 to 36 inches high and, I believe, quite gentle.

Mr. Bishopp developed the breeding of the ponies into a big business and sold them to circuses and zoos all over the country, and to rich people for their children to ride and play with as pets. Later on the herd was moved out into the country.

The water works did not come to Beloit until 1886. At the time of putting in water works there was a very strong sentiment for the city to put in its own pumping plant and water mains and to own the works. But a number of our influential citizens for various reasons opposed this plan. There was Cham Ingersoll, Editor of the Free Press, William H. Wheeler, Charlie Parker, C. B. Salmon, E. C. Allen, C. D. Winslow and J. B. Peet. They finally secured a franchise from the city for 20 years to operate as a privately owned Water Works Co.

The first electric light plant was started by W. A. Knapp in 1887 and was located in Cross street. On June 4, 1891 a franchise was granted to Wiley Warner & Company whose plant was on Second street. Later the Beloit Electric Company was incorporated in 1898 by A. E. Smith and E. G. Cowdery of Milwaukee and G. L. Cole of Beloit, and acquired the properties of the predecessor companies.

The Beloit Gas Light & Coke Company was incorporated in 1855, but the plant was not built till 1859. Joseph Hendley was elected secretary and treasurer in 1860 and superintendent and remained in charge of the plant until his death October 10, 1899. In those years gas was used for illuminating purposes only, in streets, stores and a few residences. Because of the small output it was expensive.

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The old Brooks grist mill was built before my time. It stood at the east end of School st., now E. Grand ave. It was operated by an overshot water wheel in the rear of the mill. The water was brought from a dam farther up in the Turtle Creek valley and was carried down to the mill in a race running around at the foot of the high ground west of Hancock Field. The mill did custom grinding. It was dismantled and torn down 20 or 30 years ago.

From the Brooks mill the water was carried down through another race running along Race street, now called Colby street, to the

Coodhue and Blodgett saw mill. This was a frame mill and burned down many years ago when I was a young lad. This old Turtle mill race has been filled up and no longer exists.

I remember another old structure of the early days. This was a

big frame building, the Leonard tannery, located about where the Wright & Wagner property now is. Later Josiah Leonard went into making gloves and mittens, and the Beloit Glove & Mitten factory is still running on Cross st., opposite the N. W. depot.

Chapter 10

The railroad first came to Beloit in 1853. It was a branch line run up from Belvidere by the Chicago and Galena R. R., which was building a line from Chicago to Galena and the Mississippi River. This line was the nucleus of the present C. & N.W. R.R. company. The depot was built in the south end of town and the depot building straddled the state line. The freight house door had two signs, one on each side. North of the door the sign read "Wisconsin;" south of the door the sign read "Illinois." This little old depot continued in service till about 1872 when the little red brick passenger station was built on the west side at Grand avenue. The old original depot is still in existence now, owned and occupied by Hobbs Fuel company.

In 1855 the railroad crossed the river and continued on up 5th street to Evansville and Madison. This Beloit line was the first railroad to touch Wisconsin soil.

In the sixties the railroad locomotive was a small "teapot" affair in comparison to the giant locomotives of the present time. They were all wood burners. Large piles of cord wood, sawed to short lengths, were kept on hand at fueling stations and the wood was thrown into the tender by hand. I believe water was pumped into the water tank by horse power. Windmills came later. Each locomotive had an enormous flaring smokestack and a big cow catcher sticking far out in front. In those days cows frequently got on the track. The rails were not bolted at the joints by fish plates, so often they worked loose and the rails came apart. Hence quite frequently the train "ran off the track."

In the early days of the sixties and seventies Broad street was generally conceded to be the best residence street in the city. And it was a fine street. It was extra wide and had fine big elm trees on each side. Many of the older and better known families lived in this street. I can name a considerable number, but not all, of course. There were the Hendleys, Roods, Gordons, Sherwoods, Carpenters, Fosters, Todds, Baileys, Houstons, Keelers, Dows, Heivleys, Messers, Blazers, Dr. Clinton Helms and Parsons Johnsons. They used to claim that if you did not live in Broad street you were not of the elite of the city. No doubt this induced Mr. Yates and Mr. Forbes to build their fine homes in this street. But how have the mighty fallen! Today it is known as automobile row, and all the old time residents are either dead or have abandoned the street.

Notwithstanding the claims of the Broad streeters, there were many notable homes in other parts of the city. On the east side there were the Frank Davis home on College avenue, Dr. Chapin's home facing the campus, the Broder house on Chapin and Wisconsin, the Shepard house on "the avenue," now Hillcrest, the Waterman house facing the park and the J. T. Johnson house on E. Grand, and others.

On the west side there was and still is the fine old home of the L. C. Hyde family which has come down through three generations. First L. C. Hyde, then his daughter, Mrs. Brittan, and now his granddaughter, Mrs. Rockwell, lived there. The first house west of Hyde's place was the T. W. Laramie home and first house east was the C. D. Winslow home. At