



Confluence

Where Past Meets Present

Volume 28 Issue 2

BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March/April, 2021

In this Issue

Looking Back.....	2
Our Great Supporters.....	3
Brush with Death.....	4-5
A Notable Beloit.....	6-7
New to the Collection.....	8
BHS Happenings.....	9
Member Spotlight	10
Trivia Teaser.....	10

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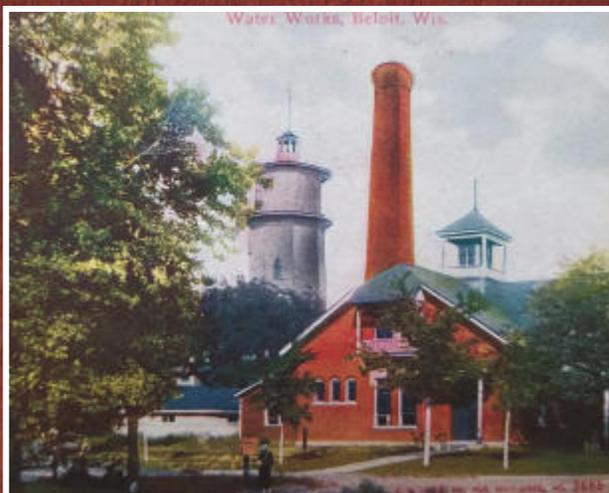
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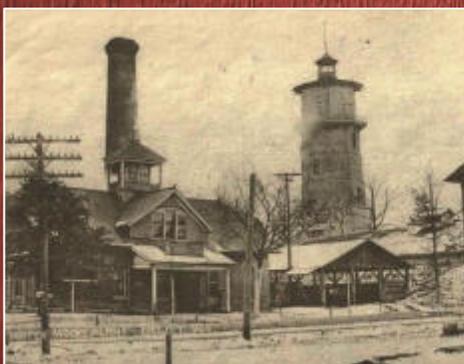
Covid-19 has presented many challenges for BHS because we are closed. We are adapting programs, exhibits and gatherings to continue our mission of sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride.



Old Stone Water Tower 1885



"Finest piece of stone masonry in the West!"





Early 1900s view of 311 State St. Today's Stanton Shoes is in the building behind "The Hub" sign. (note the peaks on roofline) Hanchett Hall is the building on the right with a "Beloit Business College" sign near the top.



Stanton Shoes started in 1907 at 311 State St. It is one of Beloit's oldest businesses. It operates in the same location and by the same founding family. Hanchett Hall is on the right.



The original building was a high Victorian Gothic. In the 1950s it was remodeled in the Art Moderne style along with a (now vintage) neon sign which was very common in the 50s. The heyday for these signs was from the 20s through the 60s.

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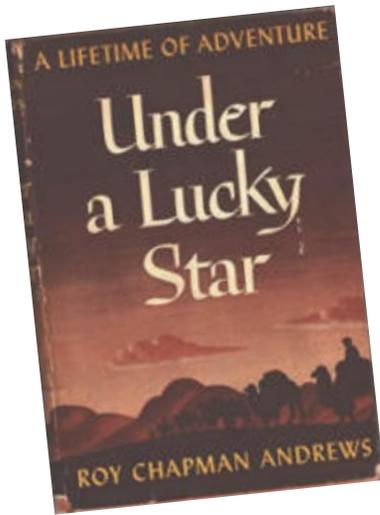
Roy Chapman Andrews' First Brush with Death

By Carol Mankiewicz

Roy Chapman Andrews was born on St. Lawrence Avenue on January 26, 1894. He remained in Beloit until the summer of 1906 after graduating from Beloit College. From here, he wormed his way into a position at the American Museum of Natural History, traveled the world studying whales, and, most famously, led multidisciplinary expeditions to explore the Gobi Desert and surrounding areas. Much is known and written about Andrews' time away from Beloit; very little is known about his 22 years here. In his autobiography, *Under a Lucky Star*, written in 1943, he wrote *"Of my early days there will be just enough to give a background for what follows. I don't think anyone except myself would give a tinker's damn about those boyhood years."* How wrong he was! Andrews devoted only about 3% of his book to what then represented almost 40% of his life.



This piece addresses Andrews' near drowning in the Rock River on March 31, 1905 when he was a junior at Beloit College. In his autobiography, he said it occurred about 7 miles north of Beloit. I've heard that it was possibly at Bass Creek near Afton or near the present Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport. By studying early maps and reading contemporary articles in the **Beloit Daily Free Press** (BDFP) about the incident, I think I've figured it out. The inconsistent or confusing information in newspaper accounts probably contributed to the inability of others to pinpoint the site previously. I believe the accident occurred **downstream** of Afton. *Photo above right is Roy at age 8 (roychapmanandrewssociety.org)*



The unusual weather in March 1905 plays a big role in the tragedy. Though near-typical snowfall occurred in the 1904-05 winter, the temperature was colder than normal, so the snow continued to build up. A sudden warming in mid-March, which led to heavy runoff, along with about three inches of rain produced high river levels. On page 4 of the March 28th BDFP, a short article appeared about Roy Andrews and Montague (Monty) White (a new instructor at the College but only 2 years Roy's senior) camping on Young's Creek - the first campers of the season. On that day, it was sunny and 68 degrees; they must have been in seventh heaven given the cold winter and were happy to go about duck hunting. But on the next page of the BDFP was a headline stating that the "River Attains Great Height." Conditions only deteriorated over the next days with a breach of the dam at Jefferson, a two-foot rise in water levels at Janesville, and flooding of lowland areas all along the Rock River.

On the 31st, Roy and Monty rowed to Afton and then headed back to camp in the late morning. Where was the camp? In other words, where was Young's Creek? Refer to the accompanying 1904 plat map that shows a stretch of the Rock River southwest of Afton, where the river begins to turn southward; the map represents about 1.5 x 1.5 miles. Note the un-named tributary on the northeast that flows a bit through land owned by Eliza Young (purple oval). Plat maps from 1858 and 1873 show that William Young (Eliza's husband or father?) owned the land southward to the river, hence a likely origin of the name Young's Creek.



Roy while at Beloit College

(continued next page)

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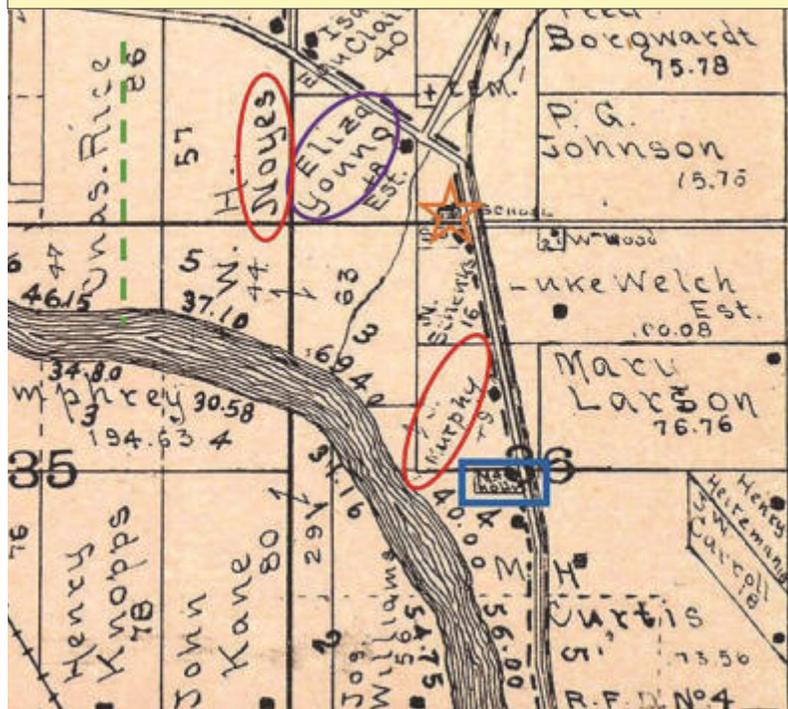
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Close-up of 1904 plat map showing names and places noted in BDFP articles. (from the State of Wisconsin digital collection)



As the two young men approached their camp, Monty lost his paddle overboard, lunged to get it, and tipped over the canoe; both ended up in the icy-cold waters. The currents were such that Monty was carried up Young's Creek; he apparently cramped up in the cold waters and drowned. Meanwhile, Roy was carried out into the main channel. He fought to get over to the bank that was lined with flooded willows. He had to warm his hands as best he could to make his way one willow at a time. Eventually he followed the (E-W?) fence line between the Noyes and Murphy properties (red ovals), making slow progress on hands and knees through the flooded meadows. When he reached dry land, he stripped off the cold, wet clothes and made his way toward the road to seek help, waving his arms wildly as he did so in an attempt to warm up. He was refused aid at the first house, which I believe was that of the Murphys; they thought he was crazy because of his appearance and because Roy could not articulate his plight. Roy headed down the road to the Hollis house (blue box), where Hollis and his wife got Roy out of his wet underclothes and put him to bed. One of them went 1.5 miles to the nearest phone at the house of Charles Rice (green dashed line) to call to Beloit.

A search party came up on the 2 pm Beloit-Janesville interurban (the rail system that ran parallel to the main highway here) and Roy's parents brought him dry clothes. The search party lacked a boat and had to have one brought by wagon from Yost Park, 3 miles south and across the river from present-day Big Hill Park. Roy had recovered enough by then to accompany the party; they recovered the body by 6 pm with Frank Van Wart, one of Beloit's druggists, finding Monty's lifeless body. The search party had requested that the southbound interurban stop at the schoolhouse (orange star), which was about 1/2 mile from the accident site.

Because so much of the newspaper accounts make sense with the geography on the 1904 map, I'm confident that I've located the site of the tragedy. By overlaying a modern section map onto the 1904 map, I determined the modern-day location. The Google map shows that the blue-boxed inlet just east of Happy Hollow Park represents what remains of Young's Creek. The Hollis house would be about at the tip of the arrow.



Google map showing approximate location of 1905 accident & Hollis home

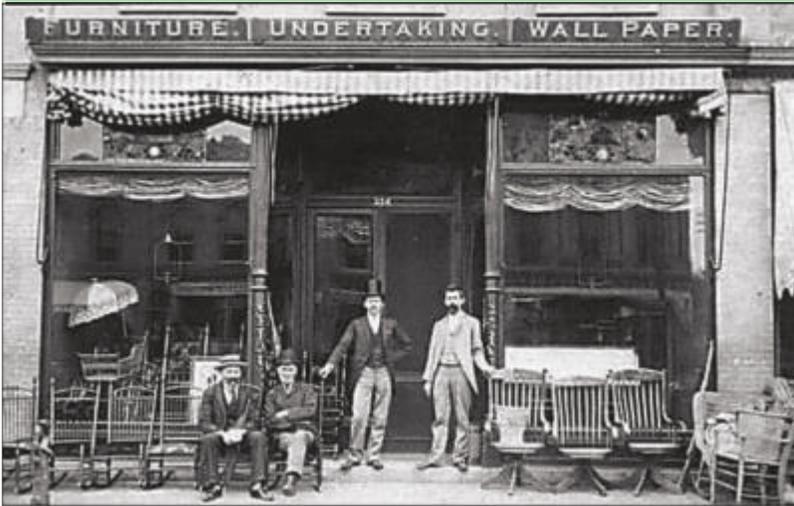
In 1926, Roy Chapman Andrews wrote that *"I can remember just ten times when I had really narrow escapes from death."* Just ten??!!! These escapes involved typhoons, wild dogs, bandits, a whale, cliffs, a python, and "fanatical lama priests," but his first was on the Rock River at the age of 21, just north of his hometown of Beloit.

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A Notable Beloitier



J.B. Dow standing with C.F. Rau in front of the Rau business. It was not unusual for a furniture store and undertaker to be in the same business since each involved woodworking.

When someone flips through pictures of an earlier Beloit and comes across a distinguished gentleman in a tall top hat, it is most likely a picture of **Joel B. Dow**, an eminent civic benefactor. There are many people in Beloit's past that have shaped us into our present city, but some had a greater part in the establishment of our industry, civic and religious development. He was born in South Walden, Vermont, and as an infant was brought to Sharon, Wisconsin in 1844. He entered the class of 1869 at Beloit College.

His first venture into the work world was an association with Thomas Thompson, a classmate. For two years they published the Beloit "Journal", Beloit's first newspaper (in the interest of the Whig party and later Republican party). After serving a brief stint as editor of the Pine Bluff, Arkansas "Republican", he returned to Beloit where he associated with the law office of Samuel Todd and was admitted to the Wisconsin bar a year later in 1874.

What a gift he was to our fair city and, as a result, he was in the first group of citizens inducted into the **Beloit Historical Society Hall of Fame** in 1938. He practiced law here for 48 years and was also a realtor and insurance salesman. He was colorful, eloquent and highly patriotic. He passed away in 1922 and his legacy lives on.



Joel B. Dow in 1886 across the street from C. F. Rau Furniture and Undertakers on W. Grand



The large pedestal with mortar and pestle (on right in picture above) was in front of D.H. Pollock & Co., a local druggist. Later the mortar and pestle hung as advertising above the door to the business. Thirty members of the newly formed (1908) Christian Church met upstairs in the drug store for church services each week. Pollack was a partner in the interurban and owned the only modern apartment building in Beloit known as the Bonita Flats, 640 Bluff St., built in 1907. (above)

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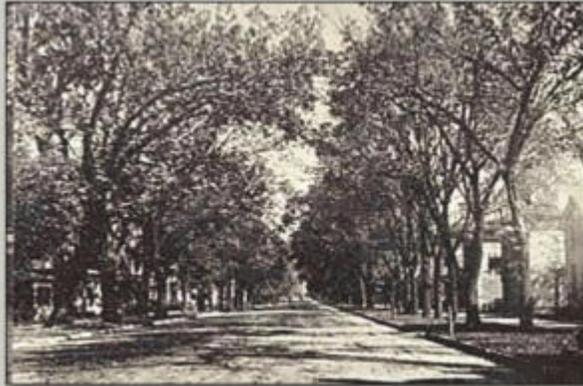
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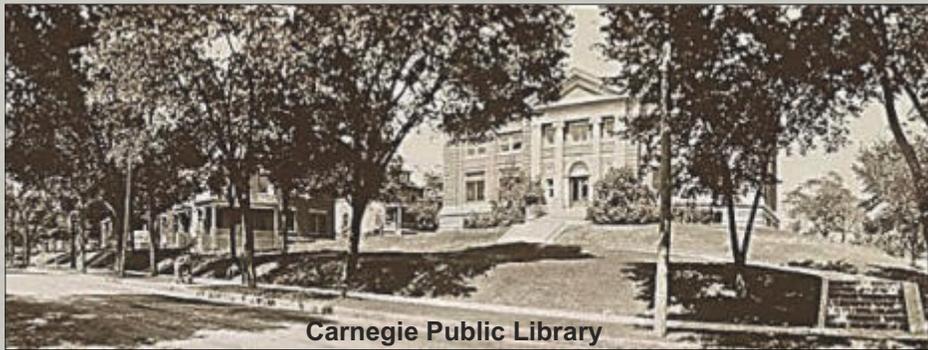
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Joel married Mary Sherwood in 1872. Broad Street was the best residential street in the 60s and 70s as it was extra wide and lined with fine big elm trees. The Dow's built an impressive and well-known house on the south side at 910 Broad in 1905 (since demolished). Very thick beveled and leaded glass was used throughout the home. The oak wood trim at the ceiling was more than a foot deep. A barn built in 1847 of cobblestone was in the rear of the property. It belonged with a cobblestone house next door (demolished in 1973).



Beautiful Broad Street



Carnegie Public Library

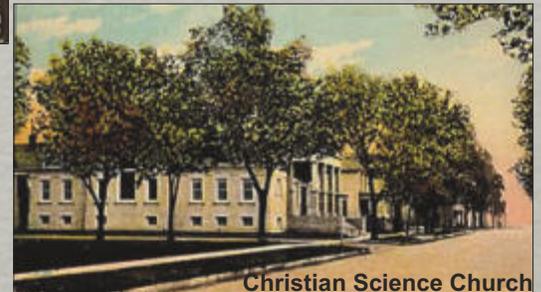


Library

Dow's noteworthy contributions are numerous:

- Coined the phrase "Beautiful Beloit"
- Worked to attain the funds for Carnegie Public Library (north side of West Grand)
- Convinced Union Brass (1890) & Berlin Machine Works (1887) later became Yates-American to build in Beloit
- Procured Beloit Traction Co. (streetcars) & served as president.
- Promoted Dow's Addition of 1,600 lots for factory workers (\$5 down & \$15/mo.)
- Directed campaign for Civil war Monument in Oakwood Cemetery
- Played key role in establishment of Horace White Park
- Led effort to establish Christian Science Church, 515 Bluff St.

It's hard to imagine what Beloit would be like today without the influence and hard work of Joel B. Dow.



Christian Science Church



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Student Center of Beloit Chartered 1944

Purpose: *“establish and maintain, with the financial support of public spirited citizens, organizations and groups, a non-profit social center on the order of a milk bar for the students of the Beloit, Wisconsin High School.”*

It was located at 221 W. Grand Ave. which is now an empty lot next to the old Masonic Temple across from the High School Apartments. According to a Second National Bank register for the account of Beloit Student Center, their first purchase was on February 28, 1944, they paid a \$5 charge for filing the articles of incorporation.



What was the Beloit Student Center?

A group of representatives from local community organizations and a committee of high school students organized the creation of the student center to provide an attractive and dignified place for young people to spend their leisure time. Until the project passed from its experimental stages, only seniors in high school were allowed to participate. They were supervised by a director (Gladys Wooten) and adult chaperones during open hours. The student committee governed the policies and planned all activities. A fee was required each semester for student membership which did not cover all of their costs, so donations were made from the city and from community members who wanted to support the organization. There were strict “no clique” rules and only a spirit of fellowship and friendliness allowed. The center was open M-F from 11:30-12:30 for lunch, M-TH 7:30-9:30pm for recreation time, Fri-Sat 7:30-10:30pm for dancing, and on Sun 2-5 for study time. The director worked closely with the YMCA, YWCA and the family welfare office to secure aid for students who were experiencing food or service shortages due to World War II. As of the **1948-49 Beloit City Directory** the Student Center had evolved into the **Student Lounge** and had moved to 608 ½ Cross St. which is now a vacant area behind the Brass Rail. There is no mention after this time of a student center.

Volunteers are the heart of the BHS. Their energy, enthusiasm, and diverse talents applied to a wide variety of projects has made BHS what it is today and is key to a successful future.



April is National Volunteer Month and the BHS staff thanks everyone for their contributions to collections, this newsletter, the website, facility upkeep, office administrative tasks, gardens and programs. Thank you also to the volunteer Board of Directors who provide guidance and vision.

An outdoor **Volunteer Appreciation** event will be held this summer. An invitation will be mailed to the volunteers with more details. While staying at home BHS has remote project opportunities available. If you are looking for a diversion and have internet access, contact BHS by email at info@beloithistoricalsociety.com.

Sarah Parcak to Receive Award from the Roy Chapman Andrews Society



Sarah Parcak, an internationally renowned Egyptologist, space archaeologist, and science communicator, will receive the 19th Distinguished Explorer Award on Monday April 26, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Following the award presentation, Dr. Parcak will share stories about her archaeological expeditions and discoveries in her online acceptance speech “Towards an inclusive future of the past: how to make archaeology for everyone.” For information about how to join the festivities closer to the event, visit roychapmanandrewssociety.org or <https://www.facebook.com/TheRoyChapmanAndrewsSociety/>.

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Message from Donna



The Board of Directors and staff have prepared the next phase of strategic planning which will focus on the community. Beginning implementation in 2021, the three-year plan addresses the society's highest priorities. Five goals were determined based on results from a survey that was sent to the society membership and Beloit community leaders.

Goal 1 Expansion of Financial Base

This goal focuses on the expansion of revenue resources including donor cultivation, corporate partnerships and sponsorships, public fundraising events, planned giving, the development of a museum store and creating new publications.

Goal 2 Facility Economic Sustainability

The Board of Directors and staff recognize that the facilities need to be comfortable, accommodating and be able to provide services to our community. A feasibility study of Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead is planned to take place in 2021 to provide data on its viability and potential future uses. The Lincoln Center will also be closely examined for potential future uses. Funding resources will be developed to focus on maintenance.

Goal 3 Increasing Community Engagement & Visibility

The Beloit Historical Society exists to serve the community. A priority of the society is to expand opportunities, resources and communication. This goal relates closely to Goal 5 of increasing physical and intellectual access to the collections.

Goal 4 Diversification of the Board of Directors

The society is led by a small volunteer board of directors that has room for growth to complement and further diversify the current talent. The board continues to work on increased accountability, transparency and documentation.

Goal 5 Increasing Collections Preservation and Access

The collections is the main asset of the society. It is a high priority to increase community access to the collections through a variety of ways including exhibits, educational programs, publications and research. Collections management work will continue to increase documentations and understanding of the collection content.

Stay safe, healthy and in good spirits!

Welcome!

New Members

Monette Bebow-Reinhard
V. L. Brown
Duane Foat

GOOD NEWS FOR BHS!

BHS has been selected to host two full-time internships during the summer 2021 semester as part of the **Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)** internship program. The **paid internships** include a \$2000 stipend and a \$3000 scholarship for each of the 40 hour-per-week positions. The intern positions at BHS will focus on exhibit development and collections management. The internships are planned to be in-person with remote work as needed. (To apply go to the WAICU link <https://www.waicu.org/working-students/student-jobs-internships/waicu-nonprofit-internship-program>. The application deadline is March 25, 2021).

MORE GOOD NEWS!

March marks one full year since BHS had to close our doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you to everyone who has continued to support us throughout the year. Without our normal programming and events that contribute funds towards our expenses, this past year has resulted in a greater financial need than in previous years. We also have increased PPE expenses to prepare the facility for reopening. The recent Annual Appeal exceeded our expectations, raising **\$25,972** which supports general operating.

We greatly appreciate your support during this transformative time!



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"(Mothers of United States Army Forces Everywhere) packed more than 1,000 Christmas boxes that will go to Beloit soldiers wherever they might be stationed. The boxes contain toothpaste, shaving cream, razor blades, toothbrush, playing cards, stationery, pencil, lighting flint, soap, chewing tobacco and a carton of cigalets (sic)" Photo taken during WWII

March is National Women's History Month.

BHS will be celebrating virtually by bringing you the histories of some of the women's clubs in Beloit. Our featured clubs have been in the process of being catalogued by our wonderful archivist, **Leith Rohr**. BHS has materials from 47 women's clubs. At this point, Leith has completed the cataloging of information on: Navy Mothers Club, Mothers Club, Gold Star Mothers Club, Mousafe Club, Wives Club of US Servicemen, American War Mothers, Daughters of Union Veterans, Women's Relief Society, Women's Clubs of Beloit, American Legion Auxiliary, Spanish War Veterans, Watano Club and Beloit Federation of Women. Check our YouTube channel for our series of Beloit Women's Organization Videos.

TRIVIA TEASER

Question: What are "shinplasters"?

Answer: During the Civil War the country went off the gold standard and all coins were taken off the market and were replaced by "greenbacks". Smaller change like 5, 10, 20 or 50 cent fractional currency were known as shinplasters. They were printed on small pieces of paper of different sizes and were a nuisance to handle. Coins were not resumed until 1876.

Editor's Note: The collection of items from the Joan Wooten Estate were collected by Joan's mother Gladys Wooten. In the January/February issue, the article incorrectly used the name, Gladys Watts-Wooten. Her correct name was Gladys Watts while she was a student at Beloit College and changed to Gladys Wooten when she married her husband James.

NOBLE ROSE

Editor's Note: This article is a continuation of the article that appeared in the Jan./Feb. 2021, issue of Confluence.



Noble Rose was a long-time contributor to the Beloit and Janesville regions and along with his wife Carolyn supported the Beloit Historical Society for many years with continued membership. We were saddened by the news of Noble Rose's passing in Green Valley, Arizona on November 12, 2020. To honor his community contributions, memorials to the Beloit Historical Society are **dedicated to the processing of archival materials** for organizations that Noble Rose played an active role. These organizations include the **Rotary Club** of Beloit for which Noble served as President and the following:

YMCA
Beloit Art League
Beloit Jaycees
Beloit-Janesville Symphony Orchestra
Beloit Chamber of Commerce

An initial inventory of the archives resulted in a list of organizations represented in the collection and identified types of material such as speeches, booklets, awards, meeting minutes and scrapbooks. As the material is catalogued and more fully processed, details of the content will become known enabling this material to be shared in educational programs, exhibits and new publications. The memorial gifts make the detailed processing possible.

Memorial gifts totaling \$3,530.00 were given by:

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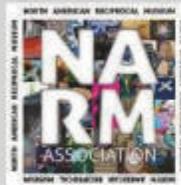
1. Six issues of *Confluence*, the BHS newsletter
2. Free access to the Luebke Memorial Library
3. Free admission to the Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead
4. Discounts on BHS programs and services
5. Affiliate Membership in the Wisconsin State Historical Society
6. Voting privileges at the Annual Meeting
7. Opportunities to get involved as a volunteer or board member



AmazonSmile has the same products and prices as Amazon, but donates a % of your purchase to BHS.

1. Go to smile.amazon.com
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Sustaining Memberships



Sustaining members get all the same benefits as a typical BHS membership, but they also receive a North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) Association membership. Their NARM card provides access for free or with membership rights to over 1,000 other museums.

Your name is also listed in each *Confluence* and our website.

<p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Email _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>I'm interested in: <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Roles</p>	<p>I would like to be a member!</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Sustaining <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Family</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Business <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual</p> <p>I would like to make an additional gift in the amount of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$500 <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is my personal check made payable to Beloit Historical Society</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my: <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover <input type="checkbox"/> American Express</p> <p>Card # _____ Exp _____ CVV _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would like information about making BHS part of my estate plans.</p>
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Submit form and payment to 845 Hackett St, Beloit, WI 53511 or purchase online at www.beloithistory.org

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Confluence Newsletter

*Sharing Beloit's History to
Enhance Community Pride*



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Donna Langford, Exec. Director
Julia Schoenthal, Prog. Coord.
Leith Rohr, Archivist

Board of Directors

Rick Dexter, President
Nicolette Meister, Vice President
Dick Gerhard, Treasurer
Ellen Joyce, Secretary
Tom Larsen
Jackie Jackson



**Civil War Memorial – Oakwood Cemetery
Dedicated Memorial Day, May 30, 1905**

Over 5,000 people attended the dedication to hear a stirring and eloquent speech by one of Beloit's most notable citizens.

To find out who gave the address for the "old soldiers monument", see page 6.

Beloit Historical Society Sustaining Memberships

Many Thanks to You!

- Vonnie Adams (deceased)
- Joe and Ingrid Chamberlain
- Rick Dexter
- Teri and Don Downing
- Dick Gerhard
- Jim and Joyce Haight
- Tom and Peggy Lang
- Nicolette Meister/Kevin Larson
- Tim and Deborah McKearn
- Sam and Judy Paddock
- William Prieue/Elizabeth Meek ***
- Charles Ricksecker
- Michael Schnur
- John and Bonnie Wetter
- Henry Wieland
- Harry Wong M.D.
- John and Becky Wong

** Designates new sustaining member*