



Confluence

Where Past Meets Present

Volume 32 Issue 4

BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July/Aug 2023

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"What's made in Beloit, makes Beloit."

Let's discover some of our great food together!

As a center of commerce and industry, Beloit has *always* been a landing place for immigrants from around the world. Labor needs in the early 20th century made Beloit a worthwhile destination for those seeking a better life. When many immigrants arrived here, they struggled to thrive in their new environment. They were disconnected from their families, homes and cultures. Many had not yet developed English skills. Some spoke with an accent or a different dialect, like those from Mississippi. How do immigrants make new friends, create social acceptance and bridge cultural gaps? Food!



**St. Paul's Catholic Church
Spaghetti Dinner**

There are many examples of this taking place in Beloit. **Yee She Wong**, a Chinese immigrant at the turn of the century, kept a garden of vegetables, flowers and a few fruit trees. Yee She cultivated relationships with her neighbors as a way to foster the community around her. Beatrice McKenzie, in *The Wongs of Beloit*, wrote, "Frugality was the rule, yet even in times of want, the Wongs shared the bounty of their gardens with neighbors." (59) Another example is the famous spaghetti dinners hosted by **St. Paul's Catholic Church**. These dinners were designed to share Italian culture while promoting interfaith dialogue. Today, all over Beloit, we see restaurants and food trucks celebrating the cuisine of their cultures.



Yee She Wong



Father Joseph DeStefano

Please join us.....

BHS 1st Annual Multicultural Food Festival

**August 20, 2023
12 noon - 6:00 pm**
Lincoln Center - 845 Hackett Street

Connect with our neighbors
through a shared love of food!
For more information visit
www.beloithistory.org/events



1213 Chapin Street

This undated photograph by Larson Studios of Beloit is of the ornate Queen Anne style frame home that stood on a wooded two-acre lot at the east end of Chapin Street. Although it is not certain, it was likely built by John Bliss Dunbar as a residence for himself and his wife Elizabeth, probably in the early to mid-1880s. Dunbar was an early Beloit resident who managed hotels. Later he called himself a "real estate dealer" and "speculator". Subsequently, the house was the residence for a dozen years of A. P. Warner, the inventor and entrepreneur. In 1924 the house was occupied by the Beloit College chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. The SAE's sold the house in 1932/3 when the college changed its off-campus housing policy. At this time the house was demolished and the property subdivided into smaller lots.

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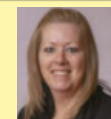
Jerry L. Murphy
Owner,
Funeral Director



Rana Wood
Funeral Director



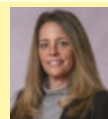
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Michele Van Fleet
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Heidi Murphy Roth
Roth Business Manager



Heather Murphy
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Kate Sutherland
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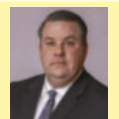
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Assistant



Keeley Jordan
Administrative
Assistant



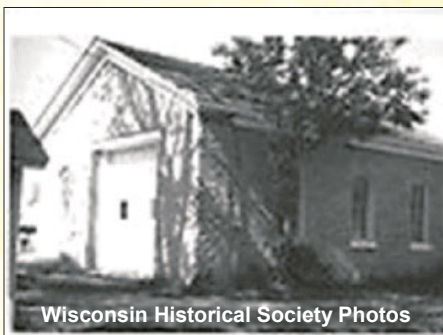
DeCarlos Nora
Apprentice
Funeral Director



Sean Murphy
Apprentice
Funeral Director

This will be the first of a series of articles about some of the early families who settled in Beloit. This was inspired by a series that ran in the **Beloit Daily News** in 1936 as part of historical interest aroused during the 100th anniversary of the founding of Beloit. These articles were published under the general title “**First Families**”.

Clark Nye (1803-1889), wife **Abigail Morgan Nye (1802-1879)** and their seven children arrived in Beloit in 1846 after an arduous trek from the state of New York. Clark must have had some training in masonry in New York as he immediately becomes involved in the construction of a stone Methodist Church in Beloit. Probably not surprising then is the fact that his house on Springcreek Road was also built of cut limestone. This simple story and a half vernacular Greek Revival house still stands today and is listed in the **National Register of Historic Places** and is a designated **City of Beloit Landmark**. This house was located on land that he purchased and farmed until his death. All but two of his children moved from Beloit as they married.



Wisconsin Historical Society Photos

At this point you may be wondering if there is any link between Clark Nye and **Nye School Road**. Well, the answer would be in the affirmative. The original one room school in the Town of Beloit was originally known as District Number 3 School. It was named Nye School after its first teacher, **Sarah Nye (1834-1901)** a daughter of Clark and Abigail Morgan Nye. The road then took its name from the school. The original one room school, perhaps unsurprisingly now, was constructed of cut limestone. It had three arched windows on each side in a vernacular Italianate style and was constructed in the early 1860s. The 1870 US Census lists Sarah Nye as unmarried and living at home with her mother and father and “Teaching School”. We can only surmise that she is teaching at the school that was named in her honor. As you can see from this 1975 photograph, Nye School has been altered substantially and seemingly turned into a garage or storage facility of some sort. Numerous Nye family members served the Nye School, as members of its Board and in other capacities over the years until its consolidation in 1956.

Clark Nye, like many other Beloit residents in 1848-49, felt the lure of riches and went to California seeking gold. Rather than trekking across country like most other Beloit gold seekers, he went to California by sea “around the horn”. That is the entire reported story. He came back after a year and farmed but no other details of his gold rush experiences appear to have been recorded. **William Morgan Nye (1829-1905)** was the eldest son of Clark and Abigail Morgan Nye. He purchased 120 acres of land in Section 28, Beloit Township and farmed it for the rest of his life. He was a noted public servant, serving as the Town Assessor for 13 years and was elected to the State Assembly in 1887.

Ira Palmer Nye (1836-1913) was the second son of Clark Nye and he farmed with his father until his marriage to Esther Chesebrough (1848-1891) from Emerald Grove in 1870. Shortly after the marriage Ira and Esther moved to Eureka, Kansas where he dealt in real estate and became a banker. Four years after Esther’s death, Ira returned to his hometown of Beloit from Kansas to marry **Clara Eddy (1852-1929)**. (Based on records only, this late cross-country romance seems very strange. I’m sure that there is a simple explanation that only a family member could recount.) Clara Eddy was also the child of early Beloit settlers who arrived here in 1841, (The Eddy family will be the topic of a future article). She was a spinster teacher who initially taught in Shopiere and later spent her career in Beloit mainly at Strong School where she taught for many years and served as its principal. After Ira’s death in 1913, Clara Eddy Nye returned to Beloit where she lived out the remainder of her life, dying in 1929. The surname of Nye was absent from Beloit for the first time in over a hundred years in the 1950 Census.

I would be very interested in learning if there are any descendants of this family still in Beloit today.

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THRIVE
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New switcher to go in service on the Milwaukee Railroad is christened at Beloit.

Ten thousand expectant guests and employees of Fairbanks-Morse assembled before the screened doorway of the vast 'O-P' building in the Company's Beloit works on August eighth to await the first view of the new Diesel switching locomotive Number 1802 and to take part in the ceremony of its christening and delivery to the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. In the waiting group were eighty-one executives of twenty-six railroads, ranking public officials of Wisconsin and Illinois, civic, educational and industrial leaders, and some fifty representatives of the press.

The first Fairbanks-Morse Diesel locomotive to be completed under the recently announced manufacturing program emerged already in the conventional orange color and bearing the venerable trade-mark of the Milwaukee Road. A massive though compact piece of rolling stock; it tips the scales at 240,000 pounds, is approximately 50 feet long and delivers 1,000 horsepower. Its prime mover is a six-cylinder opposed piston Diesel of the type originally designed for locomotive service but used in recent years exclusively by the Navy for the powering of submarines and smaller surface craft. The engine is direct-connected to electrical generators, and there are four pairs of driving wheels with a traction motor on each pair.



10,000 in attendance at the rollout of the engine



With a noisy blast from its air horn, the new locomotive crashes through a screen to join the party in its honor.

After a musical program by the Camp Grant Military Band and the Fairbanks-Morse employees' chorus, Mr. A. C. Howard, General Manager of the Beloit works, opened the presentation with a speech of welcome. Mr. Howard was followed by General Sales Manager R. H. Morse, Jr., who formally presented the locomotive to Mr. James T. Gillick, Chief Operating Officer of the Milwaukee Road. Mr. Gillick replied appropriately. The christening of Number 1802 then followed with Mrs. Gillick as sponsor in the conventional champagne ceremony.

Addresses by Governor Walter S. Goodland of Wisconsin and Lt. Governor Hugh W. Cross of Illinois closed the program. Mrs. A. C. Howard was hostess to the group of visiting women at a luncheon held at Morse Hills Country Club, with Mrs. James T. Gillick the guest of honor. A luncheon for the men visitors was served at the Beloit Country Club. All detail and preparation for the day's events were creditably handled by Mr. Henry J. Barbour of Chicago and Mr. A. L. Lyons of Beloit. During the afternoon, many of the guests availed themselves of the opportunity to enjoy a conducted tour through the plant, and the visiting party returned to Chicago in the evening - appropriately on a regularly scheduled train of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific RR.



Mrs. James T Gillick christening sponsor

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The remarks of the principal speakers at the dedication ceremony are here quoted in part:

Mr. Howard: This occasion marks the 115th year of the founding of this company, and this very day, August 8th, is the 115th birthday of the first successful run to be made by a locomotive in America. Our staff here has met and solved many problems incident to this job, and at the same time has met and will continue to meet our primary obligation - the manufacture of materials for our fighting forces. I am particularly proud of the engineering and production staff who have worked diligently and long hours to complete this first project right up to the minute on schedule.

Mr. Morse: Our new product has something to live up to, and we intend that the first as well as the one hundredth Fairbanks-Morse locomotive will do justice to its builders. This great manufacturing plant was built and equipped to provide the U. S. Navy with the best Diesel engine that could be built for submarine power. It so happens that this same engine is one which we had originally designed for locomotive power.

Mr. Gillick: The Milwaukee Road is happy to receive and add to its growing fleet of Diesel locomotives the first Diesel railroad locomotive built by our old Wisconsin neighbor - Fairbanks, Morse & Co. Our people feel that you have produced a real machine and congratulate you on your achievement. We have been operating trains into Beloit since 1856, and we were among the first to buy your windmills and the many other things you have manufactured for the railroads.

Governor Goodland: In the early days your windmills pumped water into storage tanks for the use of locomotives, your handcars have been standard equipment on railroads for years, your scales have weighed countless tons of freight. Fifty years ago you pioneered in the manufacture of an internal-combustion-driven vehicle for a railroad and soon after the turn of the century you built the first internal-combustion-driven railroad passenger car. We are proud of your record.



Left to right: Col. Robert H Morse, (President of F-M), H C Howard, Operations Manager of F-M Beloit plant) and Robert H Morse Jr. (F-M General Sales Manager)



The Milwaukee Road #760 is on display at the Illinois Railway Museum.

Milwaukee Road 760 is the first diesel locomotive ever built by Fairbanks-Morse. It is a switcher and was designed to move freight cars around railroad yards at low speed. F-M, a diesel engine manufacturer in Beloit, Wisconsin, was best known for marine engines (including submarine engines). **This engine was the first of some 1,400 locomotives F-M built between 1944 and 1963.**

Ownership History

1944-1959 – Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul & Pacific #1802

1959-1981 – Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul & Pacific #760

1981-present – Illinois Railway Museum, Union, IL

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From the Collection - Mrs. Bill's Oriental Shop - by Nellita Salmon Shedd

What could be more fascinating to a small girl than a room where the walls were hung with embroidered silks and pictures of black-haired women weaving colorful kimonos which she was told were from a country called China? There was also a large woven tray on which there were cups and saucers, a teapot and bowls with a blue pattern of trees, water and what she was told were pagodas.

There was such a room in Beloit during the early 1900s on the second floor of the building which once stood on the southwest corner of Public Ave. and Pleasant St. Mrs. Bill was a friend of my Mother and I was taken there frequently when Mother called to add to her collection of **Blue Canton china**. That porcelain was used for breakfast and luncheon at our home for many years.

Visitors at Mrs. Bill's Oriental Shop were always served tea. Mine was much watered and in a smaller version of the cups for my elders. That was the beginning of a life-long interest in **Blue Canton** and its close associate, **Blue Willow**.

Porcelain was made in the Orient long before it was exported to the Western World. The formula for making porcelain was discovered during the 13th century. The two needed ingredients are often found in near regions. Kaolin (meaning "mountain peaks") is the china clay, Petuntze ("white mounds") in the feldsparic rock. Alone, each of these clays if molded and fired, would collapse. Mixed together they meld for a white bisque which becomes translucent porcelain after firing.

Much early decoration was used to cover imperfections in the fired pieces. They were brought from elsewhere to Canton for decorating. (They were shipped from Canton, thus the name given to the china. Canton china contains a teahouse, bridge, river, mountains, boat and the famous willow tree, but traditionally, no figures. The Blue Willow included these items but also images of people. One theory holds that Thomas Minton, an eighteenth century English potter, was inspired by the success of the Chinese porcelain to manufacture his own interpretation of the fable. He added two doves to protect the two lovers forbidden to marry because of social status differences.)

Although Blue Willow has many transfer-printed versions and Blue Canton differs only by slight hand-painted brush strokes, these two patterns have remained popular for well over 200 years.

I like to think that perhaps the Blue Canton which still remains in Beloit's cupboards may have been purchased during the first years of this century from Grace Bill at her charming shop on Pleasant Street.



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Porcelain Plate w/Fitzhugh pattern, 18th century
Owner: Nellita Shedd

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Inductees left to right: Jerry McNabb, Kyle Murphy, Christopher Foy, Kyle Weaver, Brenda Kamholz and Rick West - Haskell-Barkin Lifetime Achievement Award. (Photo courtesy of the Beloit Daily News)

Six inductees were honored at the Elliot-Perring Sport's Hall of Fame Ceremony at the Rotary River Center on June 15. In the 35-year history of the event, over 190 athletes and coaches have been enshrined. An audience of 116 family, friends and teammates expressed enthusiastic recognition of the accomplishments of each inductee. Sponsors helped to make the event successful. **Beloit Health System** sponsored the dinner provided by **Knute's Bar & Grill**. A program, printed by **Vance Printing** was supported by **Finley GMC** and **GVG Tours**. Each inductee received a plaque made by **Walnut Creek**. The plaques were made possible through support from **Fairbanks Morse Defense**.

Jerry McNabb has been described as an athlete who could run forever. McNabb ran his way to stardom in three sports at Beloit Catholic High School. In football and basketball he earned Beloit Daily News All-Area First Team honors. In basketball he helped the Crusaders reach the state basketball tournament and the Trailblazer Conference championship. In the spring, track gave Jerry the opportunity to just run. In his favorite event, the 800 meters, McNabb set a record in the Beloit Daily News Invitational that stood for 10 years.

Kyle Murphy ranks among the best to ever play baseball at Turner High School and also starred at Indian Hills Community College and Kansas University. As a Trojan, he played on one of Coach Rick Hofeditz's best teams. The 2001 Trojans finished 25-2 overall, won the Rock Valley Conference title as well as a WIAA Division 2 state championship. Murphy hit .407, earning All-Rock Valley Conference honors. As a junior and senior, Murphy was twice named All-State and RVC Player of the Year. He batted over .400 all three of his seasons on the varsity. He still ranks among the leaders in every offensive category in both season and career statistics.

Christopher Foy is a great example of what it means to be student-athlete. The vice president of his Beloit Memorial High School senior class of 1989, Foy was always a student first and an athlete second. But his athletic skills were incredible and led to successful football seasons for the Purple Knights. As a senior team captain and two-way starter, his quickness and agility made him a standout player. Foy earned All-Big Eight First Team honors both on offense and defense as well as a spot on the Associated Press All-State First Team defense. He was named to play in the Wisconsin Shrine Bowl game as well as a member of the 1989 edition of Who's Who Among American High School Students. Foy was recruited both for athletics and academics.

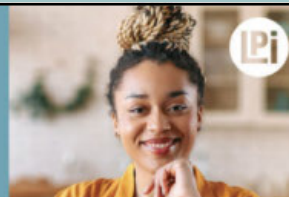
Kyle Weaver's dad, LaMont, hit the half-court "shot heard 'round the state" in the 1969 state high school tournament that helped Beloit go 26-0. Kyle was the driving force behind Beloit Memorial's 20-5 record and state tournament appearance in 2003-04. He earned BDN All-Area Player of the Year honors, first team All-State and second team AP All-State. After high school, he earned a spot on the 12-man U.S. Pan American Games team. Kyle was a second-round NBA Draft pick. The bulk of Kyle's pro career was spent overseas where he played in Belgium, Israel, Poland, Greece, Lithuania, Italy and Germany.

Brenda Kamholz scored a career-high 48 points in SoBo's 86-36 victory over Christian Life High School. She was all-conference as a sophomore when she scored 275 points earning Second Team honors on the Beloit Daily News All-Area team. As a senior she earned All-Area First Team honors. She was her conference's Player of the Year, finishing with 1,048 career points. Kamholz was an all-conference volleyball starter and shortstop in the spring. Rockford College recruited her where she graduated as the school's second leading all-time scorer with 968 points. Brenda was all-conference both her junior and senior years.

Rick West - Haskell-Barkin Lifetime Achievement Award is a Beloit Catholic H.S graduate. After broadcasting school, he returned to Beloit (via Reedsburg) and was hired by WBEL Radio where he called local high school and college football, basketball, hockey and baseball games for 23 years. He also did the radio play-by-play of selected games of the Milwaukee Brewers Class A Minor League Baseball team in Beloit. He was named sports and program director at WBEL and was presented with the Distinguished Service to High School Award from the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association. West ended his radio career as general manager of Beloit radio station WGEZ. After his radio career, West was a sportswriter and sports editor for nearly 10 years for the *Stateline News* in Beloit.

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**Message from
Executive Director,
Donna Langford**

BHS is RAZING THE ROOF!

We are honored and excited to be awarded a \$200,000 grant for roof replacement of the Lincoln Center facility. The funding of this construction project was financed through a grant of ARPA funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury and the City of Beloit in the Non-Profit Building and Facility Improvements category.

For the past few years, when it rained, it often rained inside due to roof damage from wind. At the first sound of rain, staff dropped whatever they were working on and literally ran for rain buckets and to check the entire facility for water leaks.

Collections were either moved or safeguarded with strategic placement of plastic.



The new roof is important for structural stability, safe use of the building by the community, volunteers and staff as well as providing a safe environment for Beloit's history encased in the artifacts and documents housed in this building. Staff is looking forward to the day when the new roof is complete and time can be devoted to creating exhibits and educational programming instead of emptying rain buckets.

Do you like working outside? We are seeking volunteers to help with landscaping projects at Lincoln Center. If you or anyone else you know, is interested in helping, contact Jesse at 608-365-7835.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Wisconsin Magazine, December, 1925

All over the country today various organizations and societies are straining every nerve to erect monuments to the known and unknown dead of the World War. In Oakwood Cemetery at Beloit a hero is taking his last rest without even a Memorial tree to mark the spot or do him honor.

Leaving the Middle West at Kansas City, the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad reached out to the West. Through the sand at Albuquerque, past the Petrified Forests, around the Grand Canyon, at last it came to the Mighty Colorado. At Topock, which is Mohave for bridge, the river marks the boundary line between Arizona and California. To the north the river flows in a wide valley. To the south, it passes into a rock, jagged canyon. A group of pinnacles, visible three miles away, is known as "The Needles" and is the first stop in California. Melchior Diaz, the Spanish explorer, in 1540 called the stream the "Rio del Tizon" (the Firebrand River) from the custom of the natives he found there who carried firebrands in winter with which to warm themselves. The name became a terrible reality three hundred years later.

On February 25, 1887, Emmett J. Hodgdon, a resident of Beloit, was an engineer on the Atlantic/Pacific. His long passenger train was nearing the Topock bridge and he doubtless was thinking of a well-earned rest waiting just over the mountains. But it was not to be! Between the engineer and "The Needles" was a fiercely burning bridge. So near were the flames that the heat burned his face. Trainmen jumped for their lives but not the engineer. With a courage and spirit seen only in heroes of this type he reversed the engine; baggage and mail cars piled into the seething river with him but the passenger coaches with their precious freight—safe.

The country was aghast, horror stricken at the thought of what might have been! The lifeless body of the engineer was taken back to his home town and buried with honors. The Hanchett family, to whom he was related and in whose burial plot he rests, are scattered and gone. Beloit has forgotten! Emmett Hodgdon lies in an unmarked grave.

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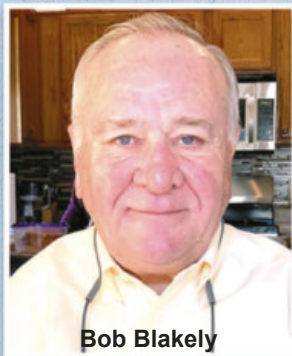
Betsy Schmiechen

Betsy is a lifelong Beloitier with a strong interest in local history. The first part of her career was spent working in nonprofit management. Eighteen years ago Betsy purchased the Villager Gallery and Frame Shop. She has volunteered on a number of boards and has also been involved in organizing several community based art projects. Betsy and her husband Tim live on Turtle Creek and enjoy working in the yard, traveling, biking, reading and the company of friends.

Mark has worked as a machinist, salesman, supervisor, customer service lead, photographer as well as serving on the Beloit City Council. He was the council representative to the Visit Beloit Board of Directors, the Beloit City Plan Commission and Beloit Public Library Board. He hosts the monthly "What the Tech?" sessions at Grinnell Hall. He has a lifelong "hobby" of promoting the Greater Beloit area. His general interests are reading, computers, photography, bicycling, science and technology, archaeology, astronomy and planetary science.



Mark Preuschl



Bob Blakely

Bob has been a lifelong resident of Beloit and has been involved in many charitable organization boards. As a real estate lawyer, Bob has a keen interest in Beloit and has read many books regarding the history of Beloit and Rock County. Bob's mother, Kay Blakely, was a BHS volunteer and Bob looks forward to volunteering for us also.

TRIVIA TEASER

Question: A large part of Sanibel Island in Florida is devoted to J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. What is his connection to Beloit?

He was born in Norwood, Michigan. While wandering the prairies he developed an appreciation for wildlife and learned the importance of conservation when an uncle admonished him for shooting a wood duck during nesting season. He became a reporter/cartoonist for the Sioux City Journal, Des Moines Register, New York Globe and New York Herald Tribune. In addition to the Florida wildlife refuge, Lake Darling State Park in Iowa, a lodge at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia and a lake at Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota have been named after him.



He won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartoons (twice), was appointed head of the US Biological Survey a forerunner of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and founded the National Wildlife Federation. He was commissioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to create the first federal duck stamp in support of wetland conservation.

Answer: Jay Norwood Darling was a very well-known Beloit College pre-medicine student from 1895-1899 and was involved in countless college groups and activities. He became art editor of the yearbook and began signing his name Ding, a contraction of his last name. The nickname stuck. He was one of Beloit College's most famous graduates.



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Meet Mackenzie Schroeder

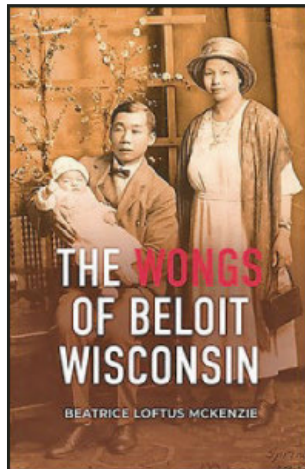


We are happy to report that we have our very first intern from **Rock County Community Solutions**. Mackenzie has chosen BHS for her summer internship.

Thanks, Mackenzie!

I'm majoring in Sociology and will be graduating at UW-Whitewater in spring 2024. My goal is to be a sociologist and be part of the researching side of sociology. In my free time, I enjoy being with my family and friends, working on craft projects and researching for fun. I wanted to work at Beloit Historical Society because I want to expand my knowledge and experience of researching historical events and information. I felt that this would be a great place and opportunity for me to grow and learn new skills and perspectives that I can take with me when I go into my career. I'm looking forward to being part of this experience!

We are happy to report that *The Wongs of Beloit Wisconsin* by Beatrice McKenzie, has been selected by the Wisconsin Historical Society Board of Curators for the 2023 Book of Merit Award. The exemplary research was noted as well as the collaboration with the Wong family. Original photos, national records and oral family history were connected to global politics from the perspective of Chinese American experiences in Wisconsin. Congratulations!



Welcome Back Kiersten!

As a returning **WAICU** intern to BHS for the summer of 2023, I look forward to taking on new, exciting projects that will help challenge me this summer. My experiences from last summer's internship have helped me immensely in narrowing down my future plans and goals and solidified my interest in collections management. I believe my time here in 2023 will provide opportunities to build knowledge and skill to prepare me for a future in collections management.



During this past school year at **Beloit College**, I've continued my archives assistant position on campus while taking on two executive club positions as well. I've filled the role of secretary for the newly revived Anthropology Club and held the role of president for the Campus Mounds Sustainability and Advocacy Initiative (CMSAI). As an Anthropology major and Museum Studies minor, I also had the opportunity to work on an exhibit design and installation project during the spring semester.

I am looking forward to my senior year in the fall and taking all of my knowledge and growth with me from this summer internship!

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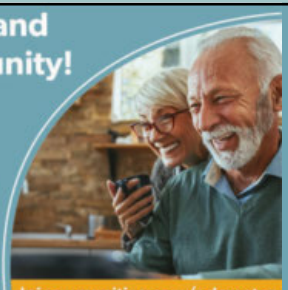
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members who give extra support towards
our goal of preserving Beloit's history*



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