

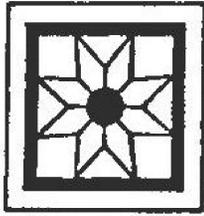
BELOIT

Established 1866

History

*Follow the Brick Streets,
But Watch Out for Indians!*

Kansas Sampler



Eight Rural Elements

Originally homesteaded in 1866 by Aaron A. Bell and incorporated in 1872, Beloit began as Willow Springs at the foot of what is now Mill Street on the banks of the Solomon River. There a spring gushed forth and was a stopping place for Indians, soldiers, buffalo hunters and settlers on their way westward or looking for homesteads in the area. A young man, Tim Hersey, conceived the idea

of a waterpower site to manufacture lumber out of the large cottonwood trees that lined the river banks. He constructed the first dam and erected a sawmill. One year later a flourmill was added, later the water and power plants, library, hospital, schools and the town grew. The historic brick streets downtown have sustained generations of Beloit families.

A band of about 40 Arapahoe and Cheyenne attacked the Bell and Bogardus families on August 12, 1868. At the Bogardus cabin, David Bogardus and Braxton Bell, 23, were killed; Branton's wife, Elizabeth, 21 was mortally wounded; their infant daughter, Ella Bell, about one-year-old was seriously wounded. Aaron's daughters, Ester Jane, 8, and Margaret, 6, were kidnapped and later released. The site of the Bell-Bogardus Massacre is located three miles southeast of Beloit on U.S. Highway 24.

The Little Red Schoolhouse stands in the roadside park, along Highway 24 in north Beloit. This unusual schoolhouse was designed for the Bicentennial Celebration to fit the 19th Century style so people could learn about old-time schools in Mitchell County.



The historic Little Red Schoolhouse, located along U.S. Highway 24 at Beloit.

Cuisine

A Variety of Tastes

As times have changed, the tastes of the rural public have also changed to include every type of cuisine. A variety of restaurants serve the public along Highway 24, from authentic Mexican and Italian, to local favorites that have endured the test of time. The local public still prefers meat entrees, with many products locally available from produce at the Summer Farmer's Market. Local restaurants are favorite places to meet for morning coffee or dinner in the evening.



*The 1901 Mitchell County Courthouse.
James Holland, architect*

Art

All that Glitters

Every November and December, Chautauqua Park blazes with lights for the Chautauqua Isle of Lights. Religious, patriotic, athletic, and family-oriented scenes are displayed near State Hwy. 14 and the Solomon River. Isle of Lights is free to the public, but donations are accepted. One can also see and purchase beautiful, etched glass items at Bell Memorials, 301 S. River.

Commerce

Farming still a mainstay

Wheat and row crop farming employ many Beloit citizens. With farming being a major source of commerce, other industries such as healthcare, government, small retail shops, and education round out the city to provide a diverse economy.

Customs

Fun events and traditions

Beloit citizens share in a multitude of year-round traditions. Bargains abound at the annual community-wide garage sales. Memorial Weekend, alumni return home for Homecoming Weekend. The Eight-Man All-Star football games take place in June, followed by the Mitchell County Fair. St. John's Catholic Church celebrates the Harvest Festival each year. Parishioners invite the community to enjoy games, crafts and a bountiful feast.

In October, Cassiopeia hosts the Beloit Holiday Fair. The VFW Veterans Day Parade marches through town in November. From Thanksgiving to New Year's, Chautauqua park is lit up with beautiful Christmas displays.

Geography

From the Hills to the Bluffs

Beloit is on the western end of the Smoky Hills geologic region. The first settlers built Beloit along the Solomon River in Post Rock country. The scenic location offers gorgeous sunrises and sunsets, as well as amazing stargazing opportunities and endless blue horizons. Travel along the Solomon River to the east or west and experience the fertile farm ground and stately trees lining the river. Travel north or south into the rolling hills more suited to raising cattle and offering prime areas for hunting in the fall.

Architecture

*Courthouses, Homes and Churches,
all Symbols of Strength*

The Richardson Romanesque-designed Mitchell County Courthouse, located downtown, celebrated its 100th birthday in 2001. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this massive, rugged building was built in 1901 by J. C. Holland. Builders hauled Post Rock Limestone by the wagonload from around the country to this site.

The two-story F. H. Hart home was built between 1879 and 1884 for the town's first banker. Erected at 304 E. Main Street of Post Rock Limestone with Shellrock trim, the home has become a showplace from the Victorian era. Though it is included on the National Register of Historic Places, the Hart home is a private dwelling and not open for tours.

St. John's Catholic Church, 701 E. Court, is evidence of the pioneer spirit and determination of the many ethnic groups that built this country. Visitors are amazed to find such 'Old World' architecture in the heart of Kansas.

People

Basketball and the Movies

As a junior transfer, Bill Houghland entered Beloit High School in 1947 and the boys basketball team made it to the state championship game—the first time in the school's history. During his senior year with the University of Kansas in 1952, the Jayhawks were both conference and national champions. He then played with the Olympic team, earning a gold medal.

Bill was one of seven KU players to work for Phillips Petroleum Company, which had a Phillips 66 team in the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) league in 1956. The team qualified to compete in Melbourne, Australia. There he played in another Olympic final, bringing home a second gold medal. Houghland is now retired and lives in Lawrence, Kansas.

Colonel William Newton Kinslow came to Beloit in 1873 when he was eight years old. He spent his adult years entertaining others and keeping alive the traditions of the Old West. Kinslow, who measured 6'7", was once listed as the second tallest man in Kansas. He also appeared in such movies as *Dodge City*, *Wells Fargo*, and *Gay Nineties*. Kinslow died in 1948 and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

*Historic Saint John's
Catholic Church is
among the largest and
most beautiful build-
ings to be found in the
Solomon River Valley
Basin.*

