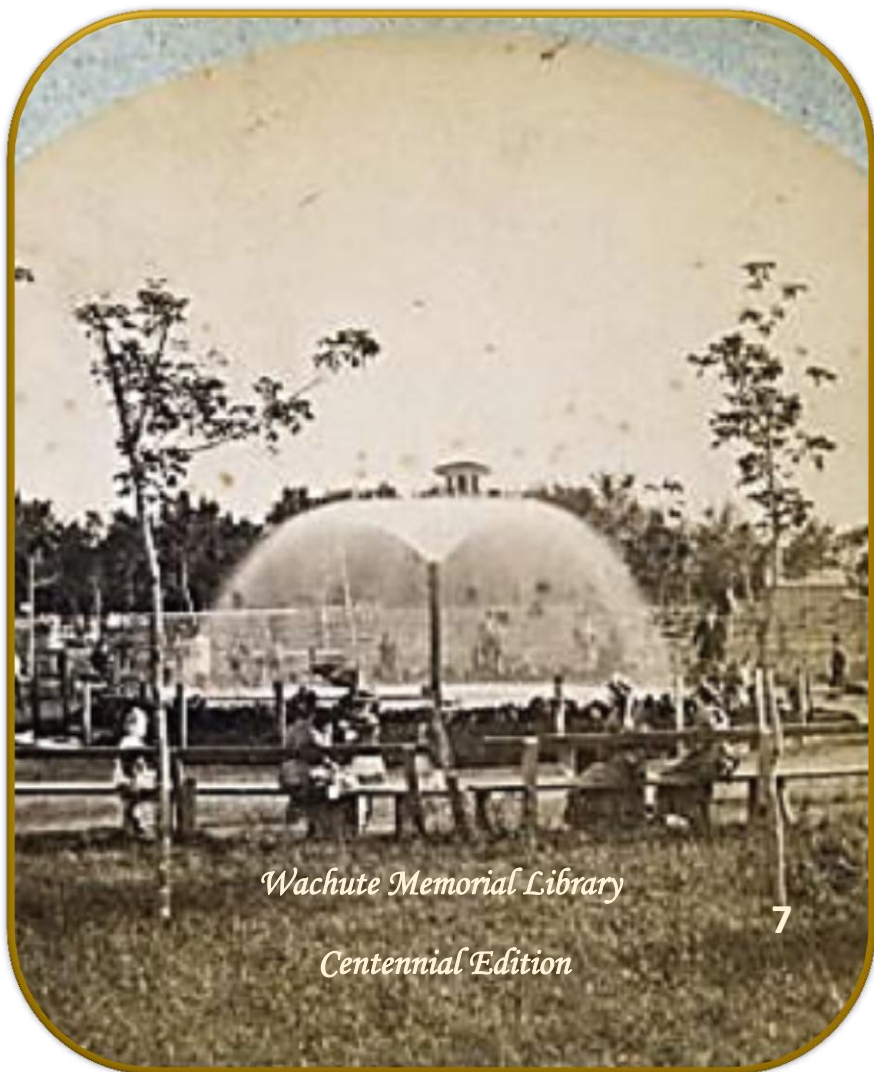


*The*  
*Great Artesian Well*



*Wachute Memorial Library*

*Centennial Edition*

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# *The Great Artesian Well*

*The Great Artesian Well*



H. Farr Stereograph from 1876

**Wachute Memorial Library Centennial Edition  
1912-2012**

## *Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*

**37 Volume IV # 7**

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*ISSN #1947-9402*

## *Liquid Gold*

I love the public library especially its location on the site of the Great Artesian Well. The library's centenary seems like the perfect time to revisit the story of the well and the sanitarium industry that grew from it.

When the well was drilled, only one other in the world could rival its height and flow. To a spectator looking through the fountain's mist into the setting sun, the cascading water looked like liquid gold. Both citizens and visitors loved it.

People knew the temperature would be 10 or more degrees cooler around the fountain, so they gathered there on hot days. They drank the water because they liked the taste and thought it improved their health.

An alternative health system using the artesian waters grew into the sanitarium industry that was central to the local economy for 75 years. The Turkish Bath and Remedial Institute operated from 1876-1920. The Prairie du Chien Sanitarium opened in 1903 and continued until it became the General Hospital in 1952.

Weekly concerts were held on summer evenings as early as 1883. Later, Charley Wacouta contacted bands to provide the music. Dr. Peter L. Scanlan recalled selling ice cream cones for 5 cents with the profits used to buy books for the reading room before there was a public library. The city leased the site as a park in 1909 and bought it in 1912—the same year the city library was created. The current library opened on the park site in January 1963.

The fountain is a mere trickle of its former self but remains the popular centerpiece of the library's garden—an inviting place to sit with a book or a *Nook*.

Attendees at the July 14, 2012 centennial party will be treated to music, ice cream cones, root beer floats and a copy of *The Great Artesian Well*. The story of the library *The Wachute Memorial Library on Wacouta Avenue* can be found in Vol. I # 6.

Mary Ann

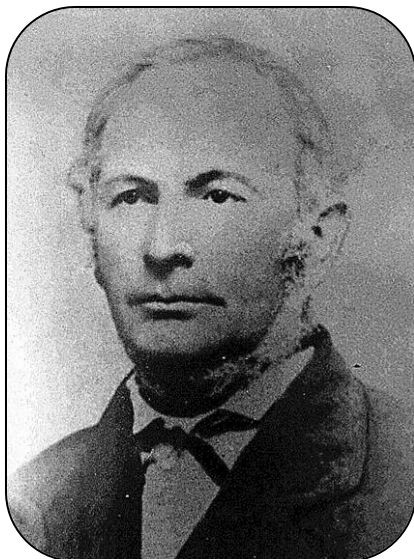
## *The Great Artesian Well*

Ira B. Brunson suggested drilling an artesian well and drew community leaders around him to form and fund the Artesian Well

Company in 1875. In July, a committee of three explored creating a stock company.

Within the month, they had money to drill the well on the empty lot on the NW corner of Wisconsin and Minnesota Streets sold to them by H. Louis Dousman.

Founding members of the company were B.F. Fay, Lawrence Case, T.L. Brower, Horace Beach, Michael Menges, W.B. Hunt and E.M. Wright— all long time business leaders.



**Ira B. Brunson**  
**1815-1883**

Their motivation was primarily to provide water to fight fires and create waterpower to draw industries. In fact before the well was drilled, Mr. Tower offered to buy the well and property for \$5,000 and establish a woolen mill there.

### **Ira Burr Brunson**

Ira was the son of pioneer Methodist minister and community leader, Alfred Brunson. Besides his leadership in the Artesian Well Company, he also did surveying. He laid out the Union Plat in 1856, which is the basis of land description in central Prairie du Chien. He drafted the original plat of St. Paul. He and his son, Arthur, drilled smaller wells around the area.

Ira Burr Brunson spent most of his adult life as Crawford County Judge. When he died in 1883, he had served 36 years; he was 32 when first elected. He had served in the territorial legislature before that.

His middle name was his mother's maiden name; she was related to Aaron Burr of early American history.

## **Drilling the Well**

The company hired drillers from the Pennsylvania oil region. In mid-September 1875, they put up a 64-foot scaffold as they prepared for the drilling. They started in October using a 6-inch bore—precisely 5 and 5\8.

In late November, they struck water at 272 feet; they didn't expect to hit water before they were 600 or 700 feet below ground. They halted the drilling for a meeting of the stockholders to see if they should quit or keep drilling. They decided to go the 500 feet that they had contracted.

There were a few problems during the drilling and few light moments. According to the *Courier*, "A living stream of water continually flowed down Bluff Street."

The Bohemians complained that their basements were filling up with water. One man said he was going to build an ark for the impending flood the well would create. His friend suggested he forget the Noah plan and get John Lawler to build him a pontoon. They found a way to direct the water, so it ran into the slough, and the basements were dry.

When the well was nearing completion in mid-December, the *Courier*, awash with enthusiasm gushed adjectives.

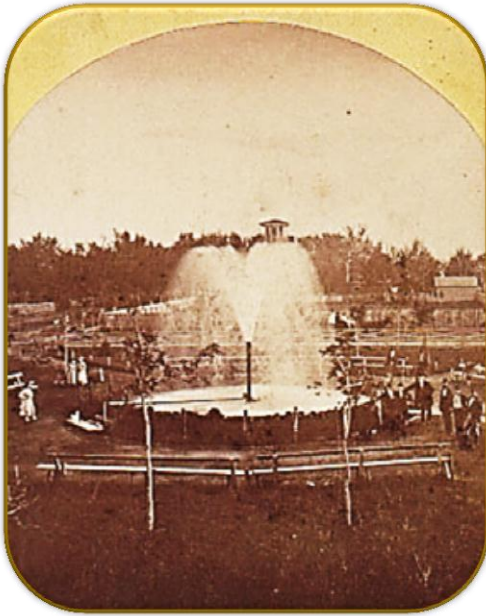
The question is often asked, what are you going to do with it now that you have it? Why bless you we are going to look at it, laugh over it and feel happy over it as it starts off on its long journey to the sea and goes rippling, gurgling, leaping, rushing, babbling and laughing through our streets—a joy forever.

It makes us happy to see the happiness it gives others. To see our children in scores floating down their painted corks, their tiny miniature fleets of lumber to where it makes it final

leap into the Mississippi. Already the boys have used its current to propel a water wheel at each end with a miniature man seeming to grasp and control them.... Long may it flow and give joy to young and old.

When they reached a depth of 500 feet, they had a well-known St. Louis chemist analyze the water. He compared it to the world famous Kissinger and Wiesbaden waters from Germany. Prairie du Chien was on track to be the Saratoga of The West. They noticed the deeper they got the more mineral taste the water had.

People visited Prairie du Chien to see the drilling in progress. The drillers, Canfield and O'Connor, were getting mail from all over and visits from McGregor.



**E.O. Lacy Stereograph 1880**

By mid-January, the paper reported that people were bringing their little brown jugs to the well at all hours. The drinking water was thought to be especially beneficial to liver and kidneys. Native Americans had long believed that the area's artesian water was a powerful healer.

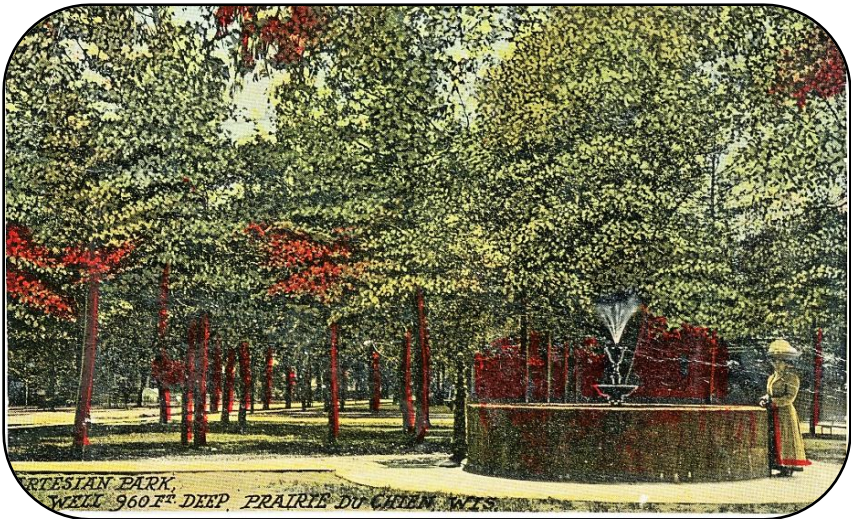
Those interested in bringing tourists to town were noticing that hotel room occupancy was up especially at the Mondell, one block north. The well would be a prime attraction along with the ruins of Fort Crawford and the new pontoon bridge opened by Lawler in 1874.

By mid-February 1876, they stopped at 970 feet



The drillers moved on to McGregor and then were headed to Richland Center. They ran into enough trouble in McGregor that the drilling team split up and went their separate ways.

By the turn of the century, there were 12 artesian wells in Prairie du Chien. The largest were Brower's in Lowertown, Weninger's 2 wells that powered his roller mill on Main Street, and the wells at the Villa, the railroad and on brewery property.



### **A Rival to Niagara Falls**

Most people were interested in the technical aspect or the medicinal and industrial uses of the well, but some saw it as a thing of beauty.

In April the Courier concluded, "Everyday people come to our city attracted by the artesian well. Every person who sees it is charmed by its beauty. When the grounds are enclosed and shade trees planted, this will be the most attractive place in the country.

Again in May. "The artesian well is now enclosed by a handsome fence, and the grounds are being improved, shade trees are planted .... When the moon shines in a clear sky, the well presents a beautiful appearance, and for grandeur and



sublimity, it is not surpassed even by the celebrated Niagara Falls. Just before sunset, the scene is peculiarly grand. Standing with the well between the spectator and the sun, the fountain presents an appearance of liquid gold.”

Occasionally, less than wonderful things happened on the well grounds, and people were up in arms. In the summer of 1876, a man who was in town to put up posters for the circus, enticed two young girls from the artesian well and made an *indecent assault*. A citizen saw him and gave him a *good kicking*. They arrested him and threw the book at him fining him \$50 and court costs.

In the fall of 1881, a few young men were going to the park in the evening and insulting the girls who were relaxing and enjoying the water. The editor of the paper warned them to stop or risk the public taking matters in their hands. He said he heard talk of tarring and feathering.

In 1881, gospel meetings were held on Saturday evenings during August, so people could worship in a cool and pleasant spot.

## **Technical Explanations**

An artesian well is one that sends up water without using a pump. The name comes from the medieval, French province, Artois, which had many of the wells. Artesian wells only work when there is higher land around the well site. The rain and snow melt seeps down through the higher ground and runs underground.

Brunson was well known and respected as a judge and surveyor. Leaders from other communities contacted him for his advice about their prospects for a well.

Brunson claimed that although there were a great number of artesian wells in the world, only one had a bore bigger or a higher spray than the Great Artesian Well at Prairie du Chien. He explained that the deeper, they drilled, the greater the flow.

The best wells were those that were drilled through several different layers of materials to the water table some distance below. He enumerated the different layers of rock that the drill had passed through and told the effect of each

on the well's flow. "The secret of our success was a thick stratum of shale which being impervious held the water down until the drill passed through it, immediately after which the water began to flow."

*Even the stockholders were surprised by the finished well.*

### **Horace Beach on the Well**

Horace Beach, a pioneer hardware man, was interested in geology and the well, and explained at the length its scientific aspects. He was one of the original members of the well company. In 1881, he went to work for the US government inspecting artesian wells in the Denver area.



**Horace Beach  
1818-1905**

He said the temperature at the surface was always 56 degrees, and he said they had drilled through the sand and gravel of an ancient riverbed.

The drilling cost about \$3,000 for the 960 foot well. The water was also so filled with mineral content that it weighed 268 grams more than an equal volume of rainwater.

He collected and archived samples from the various levels, which he had on display at his hardware store at 115 E Blackhawk Avenue. He identified 15 different levels that had been drilled through. [See page 11] Unfortunately, these and the rest of his extensive rock and fossil collection was lost in the *Big Fire of 1899*.

Beach bought a large iron lion that had stood outside of Seigbert's Block at 202-204 W Blackhawk. He refinished it and installed it at the well site where it spouted water from an open mouth. There is no record of what happened to the lion.

## **Strata Penetrated by the Drill**

As analyzed by Horace Beach

### **Gravel**

2 inches fine light blue clay

2 feet of hard limestone

6 feet of grit

107 feet of bluish green shale

118 feet white friable sandstone [found water]

25 feet of blue grit

65 feet of slate

6 feet of red and yellow sandstone [increase of water]

24 feet of slaty rock [no water]

4 feet of white sand rock [briny water struck]

74 feet of slaty rock

340 feet of sand rock [steady increase of water]

45 feet of red sand rock [more water]

5 feet of conglomerate, water worn quartz and pebbles  
[more water]

10 feet of coarse sand rock [more water]

## **Stereographs of the Great Artesian Fountain**

Soon after the well was completed, photographers took stereographs and distributed them. H. Farr took the photo on the title page in 1876. E.O. Lacy took the cover photo about 1880. The back of the cabinet card was filled with data about the well.

This well was completed in February 1896 and has the largest flow in the world for the same size bore except one. The pipe projects 10 feet above the ground, the water falls into a basin 30 feet in diameter. A movable cap on the top of the pipe obstructs the upward flow, and the water is forced outward and upward in all directions by a pressure of 20,000 pounds.

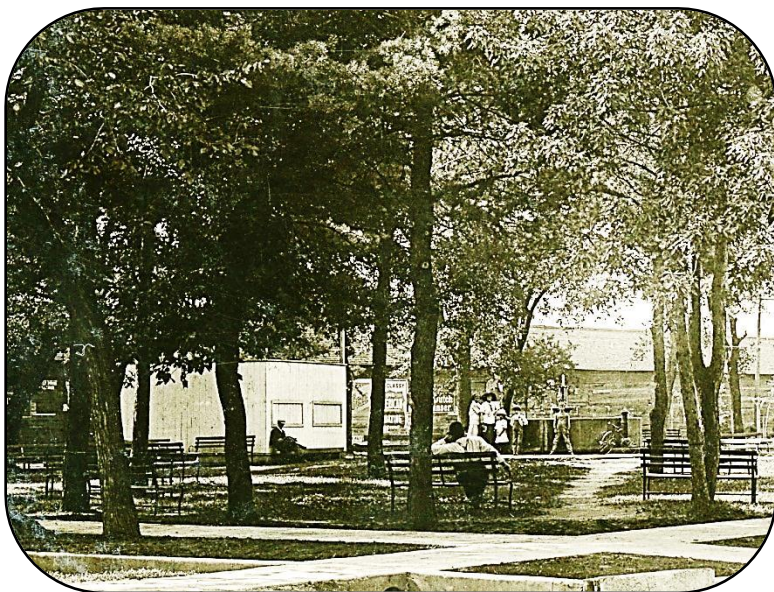
The depth is 960 feet or 970 from the top of the pipe. Water flowed to the top of the pipe at a depth of 268 feet. The discharge per minute is 603 9\10 gallons....

Water will rise in a pipe 60 feet above the ground or 100 feet above the Mississippi river. The whole distance that the water will rise is 1,020 feet above the bottom of the well. The well is 327  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet below the level of the ocean.

The water...is found to possess rare medicinal properties and has cured many diseases of the bladder, kidneys, rheumatism, dyspepsia, St. Vitus dance and female complaints. It has infused new life in the aged and debilitated.

In 1881, they relined the pipes with copper. They said it was a permanent fix and would increase the flow, which it did. The original fountain basin was circular as it is today.

### *Artesian Well Park 1912-1962*



The Artesian Well Company charged fees to the merchants on Bluff Street for water protection. While the well was a success, the stockholders didn't get wealthy from their venture. In the summer of 1882, Ira Brunson sold his interest in the well.

Although a private company owned the well, it became a public park. As early as 1883, public concerts were held there. A special moonlight event from 1906 was reported in the paper.

The Metropolitan Band Concerts in the Artesian Well Park are the favorite attractions on these moonlight summer evenings. Last Friday the music drew a crowd who were delighted and applauded every selection. Hundreds of nicely gowned ladies came to hear the band and were regaled with delicious ice cream cones and soda. Very Good!

Since the public used the park so much, the city agreed to maintain it, and in 1909, the well company leased it to the city. In the summer of 1912, the city bought it.

In the summers before the days of air conditioning, people flocked there to cool off. The area around the fountain was 10 to 30 degrees cooler than the surrounding air depending on the temperature.

The water was always cool to drink. For a time the company and the city provided a communal silver cup. Eventually people started bringing their own containers.

Until about 20 years ago, people brought plastic milk jugs to get artesian water from the faucet on the south side of the library building. DNR tests revealed dangerous levels of some chemicals—probably the very ones that people 100 years ago were using to cure their ills. The faucet was removed to the disappointment of many. Such is progress.

By 1917, the flow of the well had slowed to a trickle. The city repaired it then and in 1921 and 1924 increasing the flow each time. By the mid-1920s, officials were talking about the need to rejuvenate the park.

During the Depression, WPA workers built a bandstand, which stood northwest of the fountain where the heart of the library is today. The renovated park was dedicated in May 1940 with 500 in attendance for an evening of music. The base of the bandstand and the fountain were made of native limestone. The fountain base changed to angular either a rectangle or pentagon. The current circular fountain was installed after the library was



**1949 photo of the fountain**

finished to complement the building. Later, part of the bandstand was moved to Lawler Park and used in the north shelter. Likely, the pine trees were planted during the 1940 improvement given the number of growth rings found recently. Recently, two pines had to be removed to protect the library's new roof. Evergreens were planted in 1876; possibly some of the trees could be from that time.

Part of the trunk of one of the trees was carved into a horizontal totem for the children and occupies the spot where the tree stood. A beaver, carp, turtle and otter emerge from under the lily pads on the log of river life. The beaver was the first to emerge—appropriate given the beaver's place in the early fur trade.



During the 1940s and 50s, political and special occasion speakers often gathered a crowd at the Artesian Well Park. The high school band practiced there.



In 1960 when Joseph and Emma Lenzenmeyer Wachute left \$75,000 for the library, they wanted to locate it opposite the park on the NE corner. There was only enough money for the building, so the city gave the park for the library. People regretted the loss of their favorite park but have continued to enjoy the artesian fountain that flows there. The park setting of the library is an attractive feature to the public. The library board of trustees plans to enhance the garden and create more seating and outside user-friendly spaces.

The most important lasting impact of the well was the growth of the sanitarium industry.

## *The Sanitarium Industry 1876-1952*

By the summer of 1876, H. H. Whaley was offering therapeutic baths in a frame dwelling across the street from the Mondell Hotel—most likely on the NW corner although it could also have been on the SE corner of Minnesota and Bluff Streets. [Wacouta and Blackhawk]

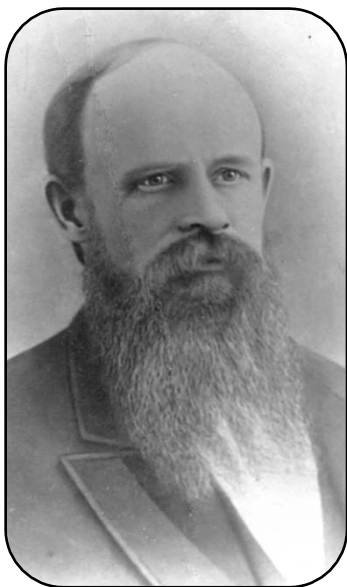
Whaley had just returned from the Nevada silver mines where he hoped to make his fortune. His bath venture was short lived, and he moved to Texas when his banker friend, C.M. Seley, went in search of a climate more congenial to his health. Seley found favorable weather and a major fortune, but that is —as they say— another story.

While the baths did not work out for Whaley, his enterprise was the beginning of the sanitariums in Prairie du Chien.

### **Dr. John Conant and the Remedial Institute**

Dr. John Conant came to Prairie du Chien as an army doctor assigned to the Swift Army Hospital. He stayed on and became one of this town's most respected and beloved doctors. His skill as a surgeon, honed during his Civil War days, was well known in the area. He attempted surgeries that other doctors would not; often he was successful.

Dr. Conant was in practice with Dr. Eastman who also worked at the Swift. Later, Conant served a term as



**Dr. John Conant  
1839-1888**

mayor and died in December 1888. The funeral procession stretched from downtown all the way to Evergreen. Their favorite doctor was only 49, which seemed older than it would today.

Soon after the Artesian Well was completed, Dr. Conant developed his alternative practice. Sometime in 1876, Conant had opened his Remedial Institute and Turkish Bath in rooms at the Mondell. After the Mondell Fire of 1880, he moved across the street and bought the property west of the alley adjoining the present day Citizen's Bank. He operated his practice and his alternative

health facility from there.

*The History of Crawford and Richland County* published in 1884 explained his work.

The Remedial Institute is fitted up for the treatment and cure of chronic disease...[and] uses the Turkish, Russian and electric baths as well as hot and cold mineral baths. The free use of baths and mineral water produce a certain cure for rheumatism. The hot air treatment has proved beneficial to consumptive patients. The institute is patronized by people from nearly every state. Some who failed to get relief at Hot Springs, Arkansas have been treated here with marked success.

Because he was so universally respected as a surgeon, Dr. Conant's vision of an alternative treatment for chronic diseases flourished and drew thousands to Prairie du Chien. His first love was surgery, but he also pioneered with treatment that would "counteract the ravages of chronic diseases." Conditions like rheumatism, gout, nervous, kidney and liver conditions were greatly improved

or cured. In the early years he treated deaf people who came from all over the nation.

He also devoted considerable time patenting a new process to make a higher grade steel.

He had a difference of opinion with the well company over their rates and threatened to sell his bath equipment, but he kept treating people.

After 1885 when the Burlington Railroad came through town, his patients could get off at the depot and walk one block south to his institute.



**Dr. John W. Rathbun**  
**1845-1917**

### **Dr. John W. Rathbun**

In the summer of 1888, John W. Rathbun became the proprietor of the sanitarium; Conant was its medical director. Both men were distinguished Civil War veterans.

Dr. John Rathbun was born in Racine but spent his youth in Dane County. He graduated from Madison High School in 1861.

### **A Sharpshooter**

At 15, he was accepted into Berdan's Sharpshooters. His friends knew him as a crack shot, so no one was surprised when he ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the entry exam for the sharpshooters. He served two enlistments in the Civil War.

In 1869, he became interested in the use of massage and electricity to cure diseases. He took a full course of study at Chicago. He worked as a doctor for several years and was attracted to Prairie du Chien by Dr. Conant's Remedial Institute when it opened. He was an experienced masseur.

As the proprietor, Rathbun was the first to advertise the institute extensively. Dr. C.E. Cole and J. C. Rowley were medical directors.

Many patients came from Iowa. The Postville Review often mentioned people going to Prairie du Chien for treatment. In July 1895, the writer told of his experience.

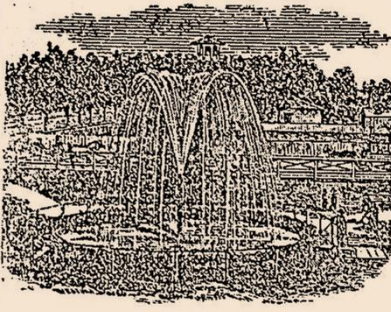
We were boiled, baked and roasted at Prairie du Chien steam laundry or bath institute last week. ...Turkish baths are great institutions but to us, the sanitarium is not exactly in harmony with a pleasure resort. We never expected to get so hot in a place in this world.

In another column, the writer gave a serious assessment of the sanitarium.

The Remedial Institute and Turkish Bath establishment at Prairie du Chien under the continued management of Mr. and Mrs. Rathbun is having its most successful season in history both in number of patients and relief afforded. Mr. Rathbun is a reliable and painstaking man, and his twenty years' experience makes him an expert.

...not a patient has taken a course of treatment without being greatly benefitted, and many chronic cases have been cured. A goodly number of patients from this section of Iowa have been in attendance as well as from Wisconsin and Northern Illinois.

**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN**  
*Turkish, Russian and  
 Mineral Water Baths.*



*Rheumatism, Paralysis and Humorous Diseases, Specialties.*

---

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# **Patients at the Sanitarium Taking a Mud Bath @ 1910**

Dr. Rathbun is the man wearing the watch chain.

From *The Jan VCollection* Wachute Memorial Library





In 1899, Rathbun and Dr. J.C. Rowley, bought the property on the corner of Michigan and Bluff Street and built a large hospital which connected to Conant's earlier establishment. In 1900, they took another partner, William Kluss from Postville, to run the business side. Things were looking up.

### **Dr. J.C. Rowley**

Dr. Rowley, the son of a respected Middleton doctor, was born just when the Civil War was winding down in 1864— the same year Conant arrived in Prairie du Chien. Rowley attended Rush Medical School in Chicago, came to Prairie du Chien in 1891 and worked with Dr. John Rathbun.

In 1903, he died unexpectedly at 39. The obituary headline was blunt, "Death Caused by Heart Failure Led on by Alcoholism." The story was unforgiving. The death of this man who had a refined education and a few years ago a thriving business lived only to become another example of the enslaving liquor appetite of which his friends had warned him.

### **William Kluss**



**Hotel San 1920-1964**

death. Kluss worked there a short time and retired although he was a young man. In 1909, he shot himself

Dr. Rathbun had more personnel troubles. William Kluss left him to work for the new sanitarium in 1903 about the time of Dr. Rowley's



while cleaning his gun. The paper implied that his death was not accidental.

In 1911, Dr. Rathbun sold his interest to Byron Rosencrans from North Dakota. He grew up in Wauzeka and wanted to relocate in this area. A successful treatment at the sanitarium drew him to it.

Dr. Rathbun died in 1917. That year the well flow slowed so that Rosencrans had trouble getting enough water. In 1920, he turned the facility into a hotel, which he called the *Old San*. Ownership changed several times before it burned in 1964. In 1968, the Prairie City Bank moved to its new bank on that location

### **Description of a Bath**

In 1911, a De Soto editor gave a detailed description of a bath at the *Old San*.

After disrobing, the bather passes first into a closet or cell having little ventilation and a floor of cement. A hinged jet, raised and lowered by a cord running through a pulley in the ceiling, poured out a spray of hot steam that filled the room.

After he has had enough steam, the bather dripping, passes into the dry room where the temperature conjures up the plutonian regions. He pants upon a cot and perspires in torrents. [One said the temperature was between 250-600 degrees.]

He moves to a 2<sup>nd</sup> compartment with lower temperature and then to a washroom where an attendant places him on a waterproof couch and scrubs him from head to toe. His head is shampooed and his whole anatomy is scoured, patted and kneaded.

Then he is placed under a shower and thoroughly rinsed. Afterwards, he is conducted to a cooling room where he lies on a couch and is wound in a sheet and covered over with a woolen blanket. [See photo page 19.]

He moves to a 2<sup>nd</sup> compartment with a lower temperature and then to a washroom where an attendant places him on a waterproof couch and scrubs him from head to

toe. His head is shampooed and his whole anatomy is scoured, patted and kneaded.

More sweating ensues, and all the while the patient is swilling life-renewing draughts of the peerless Fort Crawford Mineral Water.

After he lies there for an hour or less, he goes to the treatment room where the massage is done and the electricity administered. After which he returns to the dressing room and his bath is done. Needless to add, he feels like a new man....

Sometimes they used mud baths. Rosencrans had a Iowa supplier for the soil he used.

## Other Sanitariums



In 1896, T.A. Savage, long time businessman leased his large home at 315 S. Minnesota Street to a doctor who opened the short lived Prairie du Chien Sanitarium to treat cancer. [above left]



In 1899, Dr. C.E. Cole opened a sanitarium on the corner of Louis and Church Streets. [above right] He provided a place for specialists from Chicago to come and treat people. Cole first worked with Rowley and Rathbun at the Remedial Institute. Shortly after opening, he and Dr. Winn removed an eye cancer from a 4 year old girl whose parents had been told there was no hope. The tumor had been developing since she was 18 months and had grown to the size of an apple. The little girl took the surgery without a murmur, went home, recovered and led a happy life.

## **Frank D. Bayless and the New Sanitarium**

After having his rheumatism successfully treated At Remedial Institute in 1902, a prominent Elkader man decided to open a state of the art new sanitarium.

Frank D. Bayless was born in Indiana in 1840 and came west by ox team with his mother and her family in

1853. He went to work on a Minnesota farm in 1855. There he taught school and studied medicine in addition to farming. In 1861, he enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Minnesota Infantry and served until his health gave out and he received a disability discharge. As soon as his health recovered, he reenlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Minnesota Infantry and served until 1865. He came to



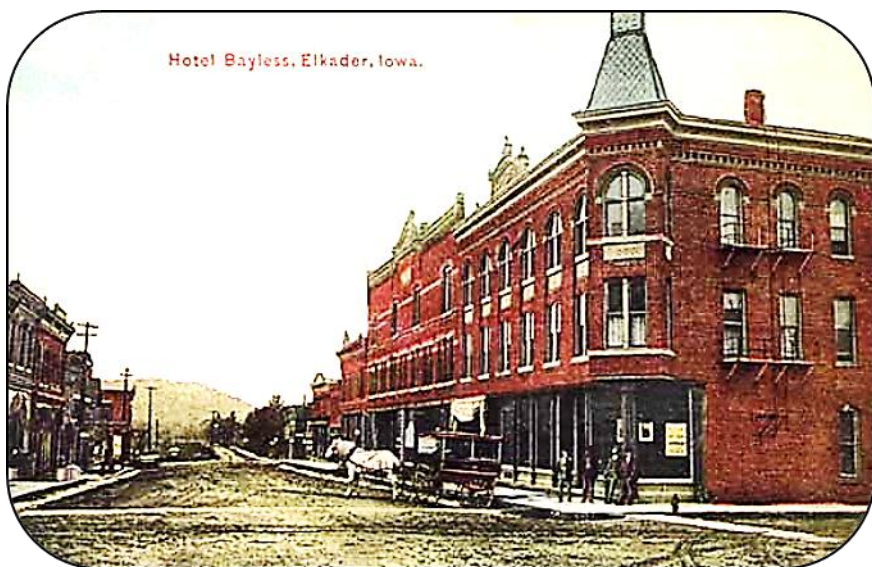
**Frank D. Bayless 1840-1920**

Elkader in 1866 and began working in a drug store.

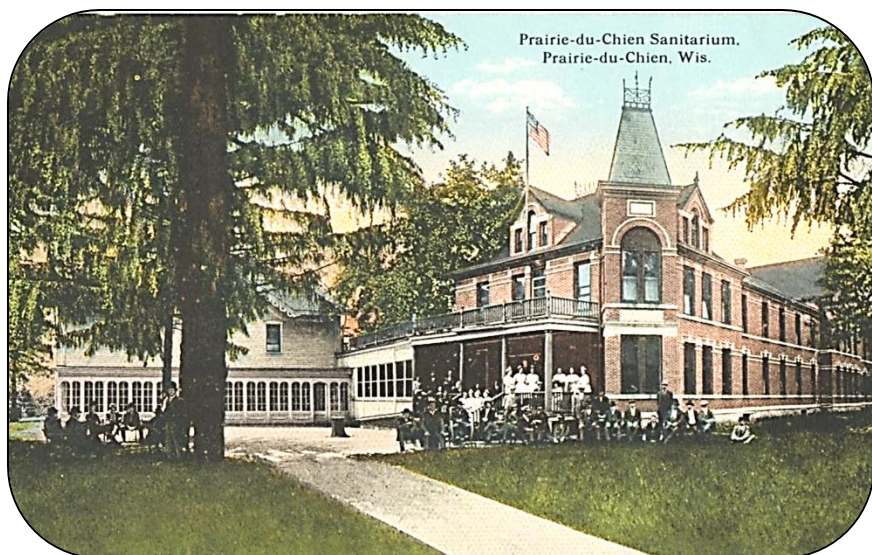
Eventually he owned 7 drugstores in neighboring towns. He served on the school board for 24 years and in the Iowa Senate for two terms.

He was a Republican at the start of the War, but switched to Democrat because he was an abolitionist then became an Independent in his final years.

In 1896, he built the Bayless Hotel in Elkader which is now home to the Turkey River Mall. He bought the Lawler Estate in the summer of 1902 and organized the new sanitarium. Bayless sank a 900 foot artesian well and hired the same Dubuque architects to build the sanitarium that had built his hotel. As the postcards on page 24 indicate, the two buildings are strikingly similar.



Frank built the Bayless Hotel in Elkader [above] in 1896.  
The same architect designed the Prairie du Chien Sanitarium in  
1903 [below]



Henry Otto, George A. Fairfield and E.C. Amann, respected local men served on his board.

Fairfield edited the sanitarium's newspaper, *The Pearl City Record* which was housed in the present day *Courier-Press* building. The paper lasted a few years. The New Sanitarium also had its own tuberculosis free dairy herd, poultry supply and vegetable gardens.

The sanitarium specialized in the treatment of rheumatism but also treated neuritis, neurasthenia, sciatica, stomach, bladder, kidney and gynecological problems.

### **Dr. Pinkerton**

In 1904, Dr. William T. Pinkerton became its medical director and served in that capacity for 27 years. Dr. Pink, as he was called locally, was an old-fashioned



**Dr. W.T. Pinkerton**  
**1855-1933**

family doctor well respected by the community. He was one of the directors of the first Chamber of Commerce, and a city council and school board member. He belonged to the masonic lodge and was a leader in the Methodist Church.

Pinkerton started the Nurse's School that trained professionals for the surrounding area. He built the Frank Lloyd Wright prairie style house at 780 S. Beaumont Road.

In 1907, Dr. R.M. White was hired to head the surgical and gynecological departments. J.H. Peacock replaced Bayless

as President of the Board, however, Bayless kept his controlling interest. Peacock made a fortune buying and selling pearls before working tirelessly to promote the sanitarium.



**CURED HUNDREDS---WILL CURE YOU**

**—COME TO US NOW—**

WE OFFER YOU THE BEST TREATMENT EXISTING FOR

**RHEUMATISM**

**AND ALL FORMS OF MUSCULAR AND JOINT AFFECTIONS**

DISEASES OF THE STOMACH, BLADDER AND KIDNEYS AND  
ALL VARIETIES OF PHYSICAL AND NERVOUS EXHAUSTION.

**The Terms are Moderate---\$20.00 to \$25.00 Per Week**

Including board, private room, nurse attendance, baths, electrical treatment and medicine. There are no "extra charges" of any kind. When a higher rate is charged, it is in cases that require extra services, constant nurse attendance or where better furnished rooms are desired.

**The Prairie du Chien Sanitarium**

ON THE OLD FORT HILL. PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WIS.

The 1907 annual report said they served 1,481 patients. Most came from La Crosse with a good number from Viroqua and Platteville. They ran regular

ads in the *La Crosse Tribune* like the one above left from June 1908.

In 1916, the Northwest section of the building was added.

In 1939, the sanitarium was reorganized as a nonprofit sanitarium and hospital. It became the General Hospital in 1952. Dr. O.E. Satter arrived in 1924 and became the director after Dr. Pinkerton. Dr. Kane and Dr. Eli Dessloch joined him. Dessloch came in 1939. Satter retired in 1974 and passed away in 1976.

Crawford County bought the General Hospital in 1975 and converted it to an office complex known as the Satter Building. It has been empty since the County Administration Building opened in 2005.

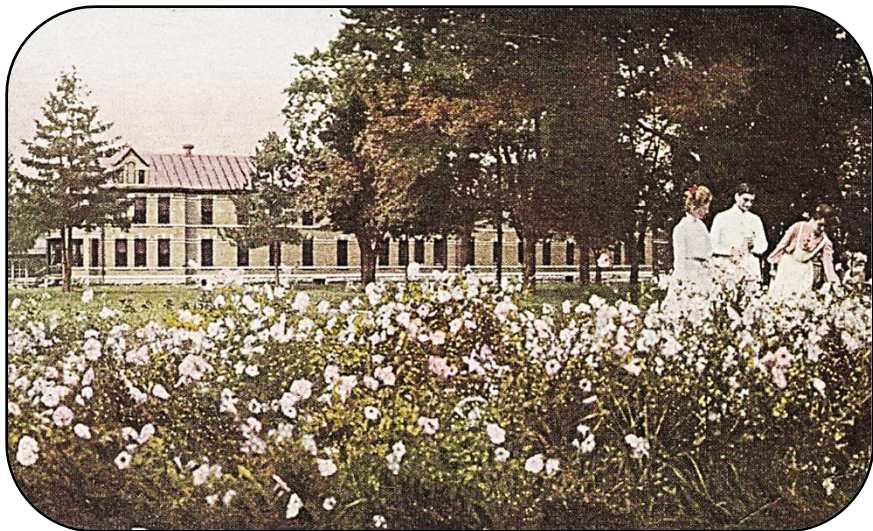
## 65 Years of Service

In 1960, John Fuka was honored by the General Hospital for his long service. He had been a masseur for 65 years starting when he was 15 at the Remedial Institute. He went to work at the new sanitarium when it opened in 1903 and had worked there for 57 years. He was said to be



the best masseur. At age 80, he still did massages in the morning and gardening in the afternoon.

The beautiful 11-acre grounds were a main attraction. The east side featured walking paths, trees and flower gardens. The west side sloped down to the river.



### Fort Crawford Water



Ferdinand Schultz, Prairie du Chien's 12<sup>th</sup> mayor from 1896-1898 obtained the right to bottle artesian well water. He applied the general name *hydrokesma* but bottled most successfully under *Fort Crawford Water*. His business was successful for a short time. The sanitariums were regular customers.

Several local men bottled under the name Elysian Water around 1915. They also bottled flavored sodas.



HYDROKESMA SPRING, PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, WIS.  
F. SCHULTZ, BOTTLER AND DEALER IN MINERAL WATERS.

1898 woodcut of Artesian Well

# Old and Young Love



the delicious beverages we bottle—ginger ale, root beer, sarsaparilla, lemon soda, the carbonated mineral waters, etc. They can't help showing their delight over the palatable flavor and purity of our non-alcoholic drinks. We deliver these general favorites at your door in case lots.

## ELYSIAN MINERAL WATER CO.

Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin.



December 1915 Ad

## *Liquid Gold*

While the sanitariums flourished, Prairie du Chien attracted a long list of good doctors and many visitors who enjoyed the city while they were taking a week or two of treatment. Often they came back for more treatment or for a vacation. The well, the ruins of Fort Crawford and the pontoon bridge were popular tourist attractions.

The sanitarium industry was central to the Prairie du Chien's economy for 75 years. It was not an exaggeration to say, the healing artesian waters were

## *Liquid Gold.*

## Thank You

To these former library trustees

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