

35. A New Home in Bloomington, Wisconsin

On the morning of May 1, 1910, we all said tearful goodbyes as Johnnie and Lena left in Johnnie's buggy with a few suitcases and boxes of canned goods. They would go to Gutenberg and take the ferry across the river, and they planned to make the entire trip in one day. As they left, I was thinking about the fact that we had just had the 1910 Federal Census a few days before, New Vienna on April 27 and Petersburg on April 28, and that by the next Census Johnnie and I would be in a new state! If the Census people had come three days earlier, Johnnie would have already been in that new state.

All went well for Johnnie and Lena on their trip. They reached the farmhouse by late afternoon and were very happy to find that the neighbor had set wood and kindling in the iron stove for them to light a fire, and his wife had sent over a big pot of stew for their supper. Lena was pleased with the kitchen and surprised to find the house so big. The prospect of being in charge of that big house started to interest her, and the next day she set about her tasks with more enthusiasm than she had expected. Johnnie was very pleased to have a working farm where almost everything they needed was already there. After a few days of exploration and decision-making, they rode into the village with a list of necessary purchases. Johnnie reminded Lena that they would live very frugally until they could start bringing money in. Lena's initial excitement at seeing all the stores and merchandise available in town faded as she became nervous and intimidated by the people. She told Johnnie the people seemed different from those in New Vienna, who were so comfortable and neighborly. The people here seemed abrupt and not very friendly. Johnnie told her quietly to speak only English in public, that he would explain the situation later at home, and that with time she would get to know the people and become more comfortable. Lena also felt that the women's dresses were better than hers, a fact that brought her abruptly to the realization that at home she mostly wore hand-me-downs. She was slightly ashamed of her dress, and she did not like the feeling.

Mr. Crubel had given Johnnie a small envelope of cash and told him he needed to pay that back within a year. Johnnie was determined to prove himself to his father and to me, and he dove into his work with an energy that carried him from dawn to dark. He managed to plow even more fields than Mr. Harper had, and to plant more hay than would be needed for the four cows that were currently in the barn. I was working equally hard, determined to do my part. I found a second hire position with a family that had just had a new baby; and with the days growing longer I could work into the evening sewing clothes and linens for my hope chest. Johnnie and I talked to each other on the telephone every Sunday evening, all about the problems and small triumphs we were having.

As the weeks went by, a small plan started to form in my mind. When I told Johnnie about it, he thought it was maybe too ambitious, and he worried that he would not have enough money. I told him that my father had promised to give me on my wedding day all the money that I had given him from my hiring out, and that that money could help us meet our financial obligations. In the end Johnnie agreed to the plan, which was as follows: he would arrange to hire the neighbor's 15-year-old twins, a boy and a girl. The girl would help Lena in the house and help her put in a large garden, prune the fruit trees, put more eggs on the brooder to increase the stock of laying hens, slop the pigs well so the sows would be fertile, and milk the cows morning and night. The boy would help Johnnie with the management of the heavy farm work, the plowing and harrowing and planting and

weeding and harvesting in the fields, the felling and sawing of trees for firewood, the greasing and maintenance of all the farm equipment including the windmill, and the transportation of the milk to town every day. Johnnie would offer Lena a small stipend over and above the hire wage, to compensate for her having to supervise the young hire girl. This stipend was to be given to her directly each week, for her own personal use, to spend on clothes or whatever she would like. The hire fee for the twins would, of course, be paid to their father. What convinced Johnnie to try this plan was the thought that with extra help on the farm he might be able to think about building up his herd, and thereby his milk production and profitability. It would be a gamble, but with the security of my money in November, he felt more comfortable that he would be able to repay his father's loan within the year.

It turned out that this plan worked better than we ever thought it could. Lena found that she loved being in charge, able to boss someone around who could not sass her back the way her sisters did; and she thrived on being the person who knew the right and best way to do things. Suddenly she was able to appreciate the strict upbringing she had had that made it possible for her to be an expert on so much about house and farm management, even at her young age. She found herself eager to get out of bed in the morning no matter how much hard work was ahead of her that day, because she would be able to teach someone and share the workload with someone. Fortunately, the hire girl was of a mild and agreeable disposition, so that the two girls got on well. Johnnie got on equally well with the boy and found that he, too, enjoyed being the boss and the expert. By fall he was talking seriously with the owner of the creamery and some of the more successful farmers about the best way to increase his herd. They proved glad to help him because they recognized a man with a vision and the ability to work hard to make that vision a reality. The creamery owner arranged for the New Glarus representative to come to Bloomington to visit Johnnie's farm and tell him about their rules and requirements, their milk storage methods, and their recommendations for herd management, including the selection of cows for breeding as well as milking. They also offered him lenient terms to hook up to the Brodhead telephone exchange. Johnnie was like a sponge soaking up information, and he and I talked at length about these opportunities for several weeks. We were both so busy and productive we hardly had time to miss each other.

The year was flying by, and one day I got out of bed and realized it was already October and I would be getting married in a little over a month. There was still too much work to do! Fortunately, I fit into the white silk wedding gown trimmed with beading and lace that my sister Kate had worn in January that year, and we would re-fashion the yards and yards of tulle in her wedding veil with apple blossoms to match my bodice spray and my wedding bouquet. Regina was to be my maid of honor and would look very pretty in pink silk. Johnnie's 14-year-old brother Henry would be Johnnie's best man. My parents called all our family in Salem, South Dakota, and urged them all to come visit for several weeks, to make this a grand family celebration. Once Joe and I were married, there would be nine of us in our family married, and only the three youngest left unmarried: Arthur 16, Regina 14, and Andrew 11. As my mother told her children in Salem, "We may not have another wedding for some time. I think we should take this opportunity to get all the family together, and I would really like it if you could come. I haven't even seen the newest babies yet. Between our

A BROTHER AND SISTER WED SISTER AND BROTHER

Unique Wedding Ceremony In Cruebel and Sebers Families Took Place Tuesday.

Sister and brother marrying brother and sister, the two wedding being performed at the same hour one in New Vienna and the other in Petersburg, was the unique double nuptial event in the Sebers and Cruebel families, which transpired last Tuesday morning.

The marriage of Miss Elisabeth Cruebel and Mr. Joseph Sebers, occurred in St. Peter and Paul's church at Petersburg. The wedding ceremony was performed by Rev. Father Nacke, who also read the nuptial mass. The bride was attired in a gown of white silk, trimmed with beeding and lace, wore veil and carried apple blossoms. She was attended by Miss Caroline Cruebel, sister of the bride, who wore a pink silk dress. The groom was attended by Arthur Sebers, his cousin.

The marriage of Miss Mathilda Sebers and Mr. John F. Cruebel, took place in St. Boniface church, at New Vienna, Rev. Father Luetko, officiating at the nuptial ceremonies and highmass. The attendants were Miss Regina Sebers, sister of the bride and Mr. John Cruebel, brother of the groom. The bride's wedding gown was of white silk, trimmed with beeding and lace. She also wore a veil and carried a bouquet of apple blossoms. Her maid was attired in a gown of pink silk.

Following the church ceremonies, the two wedding parties went to the Cruebel home near Petersburg where the reception was held. Over one hundred families were invited and the reception was one of the largest ever held in the vicinity. A bountiful wedding banquet was served and the usual festivities were in order throughout the day.

The parents of the young people, who figured in this double nuptial event, are Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sebers of New Vienna and Mr. and Mrs. John Cruebel of Petersburg. The families are among the most prominent and highly respected in their respective localities. The young ladies were born and reared in the vicinity where they grew to young womanhood and by their noble traits of character have won the admiration and esteem of hosts of friends. The young men are among the progressive and capable young farmers of their respective localities. Both are of excellent character and have the qualifications and opportunity to make a success of life. The newly-weds will go to housekeeping on farm. They have the heartiest good wishes of their many friends.

house and Mary's house and Lizzie's house, we will have plenty of room." It turned out my mother was very prescient. There would not be another wedding in our family for ten years. Arthur would marry in 1920, Andrew in 1921, and Regina in 1922. Knowing how much this reunion meant to my mother, my father added a financial incentive. He would give John and William and Anna \$100 each to help with train tickets. John had a friend who worked for the railroad, one of 30 employees at the train depot, who could get him train tickets at a good price. At that time Salem was the junction of two railroads, the Chicago & Northwestern and the Omaha, and it was a very busy railroad town, with 8 passenger trains every day and over 20 freight trains every day. All three families agreed to come, with their ten children. We all understood that Anton and Adelheid could not come because their first baby was due in a few weeks. Anton agreed he would work with a neighbor to manage the farm chores for all the family farms for the two weeks they would be gone. I was thrilled to learn that my brother John would use the railroad car transport service to bring his beautiful new car down, because I wanted to ride in it on our wedding day. My father even chipped in a little extra money because he wanted to see for himself how the Ford Model T handled, since he was considering the purchase of an automobile.

Lizzie and I started meeting excitedly to plan our big day. In a great romantic gesture we decided that both weddings should occur simultaneously but at different churches. Lizzie and Joe would marry in Petersburg at Sts. Peter and Paul Church, and Johnny and I would marry in New Vienna at St. Boniface Church. I could just hear the bells of both churches ringing joyously at the same time as we came down the church steps after the weddings! It was all just so exciting, Little Dear One! Johnnie's father wanted to have the wedding day festivities at his house for both weddings, and he invited over 100 families to the wedding, which was one of the largest weddings ever in the New Vienna/Petersberg area. Can you imagine how festive and chaotic it would be to have 300 or more people at your celebration? I love to look at this newspaper announcement of our wedding. I know my father was gratified to have his family identified as "prominent in the community" and I am sure he laughed to have me described as having "noble traits of character." In his opinion the words "too independent, opinionated, and stubborn" would be a better fit.

Johnnie and Lena came home from Wisconsin the third week of October so Lena could help her sister Lizzie prepare for her wedding to my brother Joe. Lena was to be Lizzie's maid of honor. Johnnie's father agreed that Lena need not go back to Bloomington because the farm work there was slowing down as winter came on, and the twins could help Johnnie manage. Lena of course was ecstatic with this decision because she could once again spend time with her beloved Henry, whose family lived just on the neighboring farm. Indeed, Lena and Henry would marry in two years. Johnnie and I had a most joyful reunion, but he spent only three days with us getting his suit fitted and attending a prenuptial class with Joe and Lizzie and me at the rectory. Then Johnnie went back to Bloomington and returned to Iowa only two days before our wedding. By that time all the Salem family had arrived. They came together by train from Salem to Dubuque, a journey of a little over 21 hours, and then they all came by car from Dubuque to New Vienna, a distance of 32 miles. John and his wife Agnes and their four children rode in his car, and he had arranged with people he knew who had cars, to pick up William and Anna and their four children and Anna and Henry and their two children.

We have seen the wedding photos of me and my Johnnie, my oh-so-handsome Johnnie, and we have seen the accounts of the big wedding celebrations in those days, so right now all I have left to report is that the day was indeed just as magical as you can imagine. The only thing that did not happen as I planned was that the bells did not ring simultaneously. Father Nacke finished the service about ten minutes before Father Luetke. But the bells at both churches did ring a satisfyingly long time. Thanksgiving was two days later, on November 24, and with all the family together, except Anton and Adelheid, of course, it was indeed the best Thanksgiving I had ever had. I remember wondering if we would ever be able to do something like that again. Our family seemed to be getting more and more scattered. Johnny and I would be going to Wisconsin; Joe and Lizzie would go to Salem right after their wedding because my father had arranged a farm for them there. As we have seen, eventually most of the Sabers clan ended up in the Salem area, even though both Joe and Anton did not stay there. By June 1, 1925, six of us were living in Salem with their families; John, William, Anna, Lizzie, Kate, and Regina. Mary, Anton, and Arthur remained in New Vienna. Joe was temporarily in Bloomington, and Andrew was temporarily in Madison, Indiana, but he would shortly move to Salem, where he remained all his life. In her later years my mother spent every winter in Salem with the family there, and every summer at her house in New Vienna. In fact, she was staying in Salem when she died on January 4, 1948.



We haven't talked a lot about what influenced people to move to one area rather than another if they were looking to buy land or farms in those days. Unless it was because they had relatives or friends in the new place, it was often because a particular land agent came at the right time and had strong sales abilities. The land agents often did very well for themselves, as we have seen. Here are two examples of land agent advertising, the first one printed on the back cover of a 1921 farm record book advertising land in South Central Wisconsin, saying "You can get two to three acres of this wonderful farmland for the price of one acre of Iowa land", and the second a land agent letter to an attorney in Dyersville advertising land in North Dakota. The three-page letter is followed by a printed, more readable version of that letter.

NOVIUS LAND AND LOAN CO.
LIDGERWOOD, N. DAK.
March 14/1912

Geo. Harn Esq.
Dyersville, Iowa

Dear Sir:

Mr. H. F. Drzme, Cashier of the German State Bank in your town, has given us your name as a desirable man to make a business connection with to work up some business in farm lands in your territory. We have recently sold in our County, two fine improved 160-acre farms to Mr. John Hrying of your district. Mr. Hrying now has three sons located some 18 miles from him in this County, in a very fine farming district. We have districts that are very attractive for German Catholics and for German Lutherans. We have a very solid and substantial class of Germans in our district - a tribute to our little city. We mail you one of our 1912 calendars. This shows you our territory - S. E. corner of North Dakota and N. E. corner of South Dakota probably as good a farming district as in the northwest. We hope you can interest some men to do the same as Mr. Hrying - come out and carefully look us over and if pleased with our Country - make some investments. We mail you a couple of our 1912 lists. Can furnish you more if you need. We will give you a commission of \$2.00 an acre. We desire down about 1/4 or 1/3 at time of sales and can then make very easy terms up to 10 years on the balance. We have a good field man sectioning for business, and we can send him to spend some days with you to assist you if you so desire. In our land list the following numbers would be especially attractive to Germans, either Catholics or Lutherans As a whole this is a splendid bunch of farms. Please write us if you will work with us for business in 1912. Yours very truly,

#2.

Disturbance. We have a very solid and substantial class of Germans in our district - a tribute to our little city. We mail you one of our 1912 calendars. This shows you our territory - S. E. corner of North Dakota and N. E. corner of South Dakota probably as good a farming district as in the northwest. We hope you can interest some men to do the same as Mr. Hrying - come out and carefully look us over and if pleased with our Country - make some investments. We mail you a couple of our 1912 lists. Can furnish you more if you need. We will give you a commission of \$2.00 an acre.

#3.

We desire down about 1/4 or 1/3 at time of sales and can then make very easy terms up to 10 years on the balance. We have a good field man sectioning for business, and we can send him to spend some days with you to assist you if you so desire. In our land list the following numbers would be especially attractive to Germans, either Catholics or Lutherans As a whole this is a splendid bunch of farms. Please write us if you will work with us for business in 1912.

Nov 11 - 12 - 13 - 14 - 15
16 - 17 - 23 - 24 - 25 + 26
27 - and 27 1/2. As a whole this is a splendid bunch of farms. Please write us if you will work with us for business in 1912.

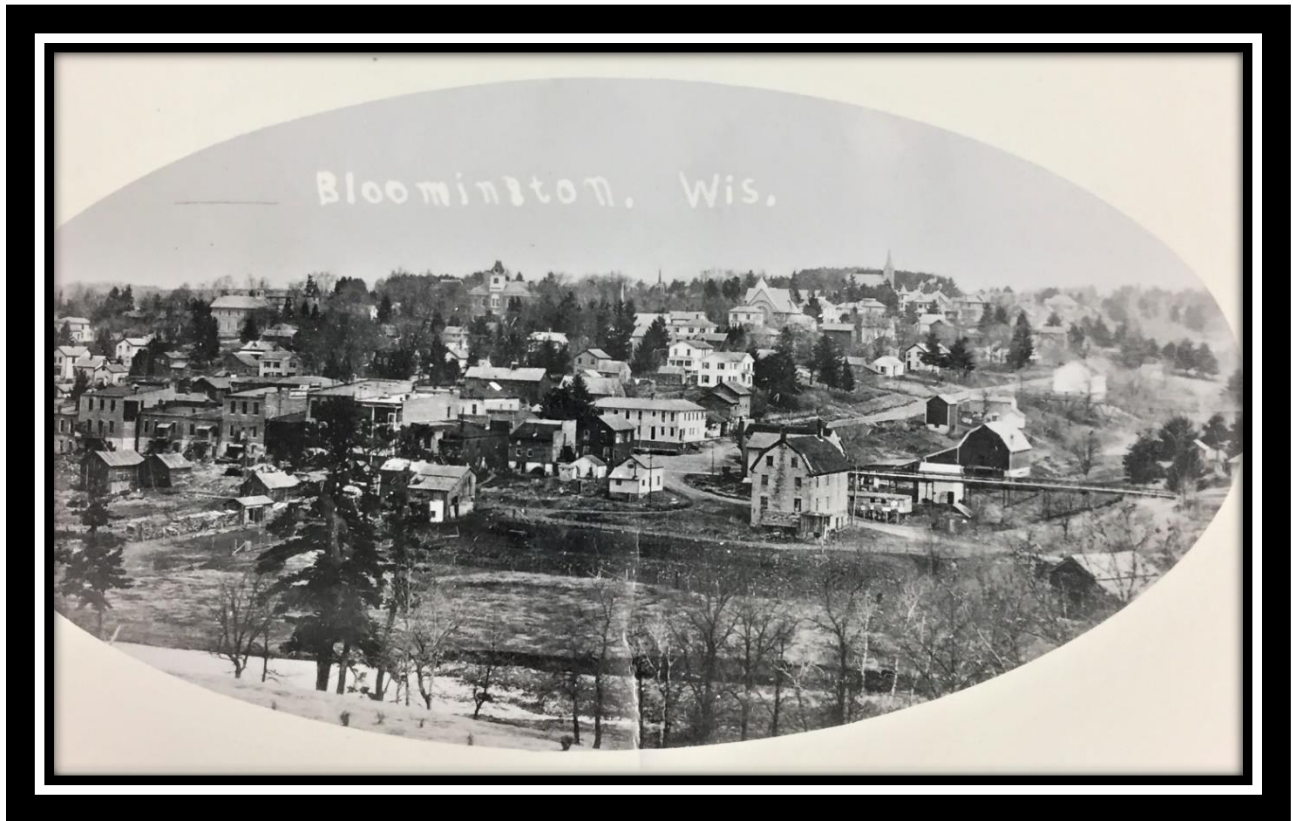
Novius Land & Loan Co.
Lidgerwood, N. D.

“March 14, 1912, Movius Land and Loan Co. in Lidgerwood North Dakota. To George Harn Esq. in Dyersville, Iowa. Dear Sir: M. H. F. Drzme, Cashier of the German State Bank in your town, has given us your name as a desirable man to make a business connection with to work up some business in farm lands in your territory. We have recently sold two fine, improved 160 acre farms to Mr. John Hrying from your district. Mr. Hrying has three sons located some 18 miles from him in this County, in a very fine farming district. We have districts that are very attractive for German Catholics and for German Lutherans. We have a very solid and substantial class of Germans in our district – a tribute to our little city. We mail you one of our 1912 calendars. This shows you our territory – S. E. corner of North Dakota and N.E. corner of South Dakota probably as good a farming district as in the northwest. We hope you can interest some men to do the same as Mr. Hrying - come out and carefully look us over and if pleased with our Country make some investments. We mail you a couple of our 1912 lists. Can furnish you more if you need. We will give you a commission of \$2.00 an acre. We desire down about 1/4 or 1/3 at time of sales and can then make very easy terms up to 10 years on the balance. We have a good field man sectioning for business, and we can send him to spend some days with you to assist you if you so desire. In our land list the following numbers would be especially attractive to Germans, either Catholics or Lutherans As a whole this is a splendid bunch of farms. Please write us if you will work with us for business in 1912. Yours very truly,”

As we have seen, the land agent was the catalyst that brought Johnnie and me and eventually the rest of the Crubels to Bloomington. At any rate, the happy days in New Vienna flew by, and soon it was time for Johnnie and me to be on our way to Bloomington. I had convinced Johnnie that we needed to spend one night and day in Dubuque so that I could see the new merchandise in the shops there, and he agreed because he wanted to see what new farm implements might be available. My brother John wanted to see our farm, so he arranged to drive over with Mr. Crubel and my father and take our heavier trunks to Bloomington. That left Johnnie and me with a lighter load for our buggy. When the three men returned to New Vienna, the families from Salem would leave, taking Joe and Lizzie with them to start their farming in South Dakota. Johnnie and I left New Vienna tearfully, but also eagerly.

At last we arrived in Bloomington, and my new wonderful life was to begin. It was truly like a dream, my Little Dear One -the house, the farm, the freedom! Everything in very good order! With a great sigh of contentment Johnnie and I fell asleep that night in our own bed in our own house on our own farm.

And now let's take a look at some great photos and information about the town where Johnnie and I moved, Bloomington, Wisconsin.



One of the people I met in my early months in Bloomington who quickly became a close friend was Daisy Brooks, a vibrant and independent woman about 20 years older than I was. She is the one who showed me most of the photos we will look at now, recorded in a wonderful book called *Snapshots In Time*, and told me so much about Bloomington and its history. She actually wrote a history of the village, but that was after my time. I met her one day when I came to town with

Johnnie on one of his milk deliveries. I had stopped at the library to pick up another book to read, and she was taking a turn as the volunteer librarian. As I was looking over the books on the shelves, she suddenly asked me if I were looking for anything in particular. Her manner seemed a little abrupt and haughty, and at first I felt intimidated. As I came to know her, however, I understood that her manner arose from an inability to adopt the traditional feminine restrictions and retiring mannerisms that were expected of a genteel lady of the late 1800s. She seemed to be always chafing at an expectation that she behave in a certain manner, a manner that stifled her intelligence and ambition. This was, of course, an attitude toward life that strongly appealed to me. We became fast friends despite our differences, and it may have been precisely our differences that allowed us to have the most amazing conversations over the years about all manner of controversial subjects.



Daisy was the daughter of Dr. Jesse Brooks and his wife Josephine, who were among the first settlers in Bloomington. She was the one and only graduate in the first Bloomington High School Graduating Class in 1886. After graduation, Daisy taught in the Bloomington schools. In 1892 she married Dr. Manuel DeForest Brown and moved to Monona, Iowa. Dr. Brown died nine years later, in 1901, and Daisy returned to Bloomington with her 5-year old son. She never remarried, but instead worked for many years as a reporter for the *Grant County Herald*. She became an active member of the Salmagundi Club. Because Daisy was so intelligent and progressive in her thinking, I became comfortable over time talking with her about many unpopular or unusual subjects. For example, she knew of and approved the Harper adoption of the little Indian boy, feeling strongly about the

injustices that had been done to the Indians in this country. She was passionate about the need for women to be highly educated and to be able to take more control of their own lives. Most especially she was a tireless advocate for the right of women to vote. I had never been exposed to someone like her, and I felt like a whole new world had opened up to me. Perhaps most unusually and importantly, she did not shy away from allowing herself a sharp clarity of perception about all the failures and foibles of ideologies, institutions, traditions, and people, especially those institutions and individuals who knew beyond doubt that their view of the world was indeed the only correct one that everybody else should espouse. She conversed unreservedly about topics others tried to avoid or hide under the rug, for example, the power of the church, especially the Catholic Church, to forbid any family planning. Her father and favorite teacher and conversationalist had died in 1904, and she missed him dreadfully. It was probably her many conversations with him that honed her mind to its progressive and democratic bent. Dr. Brooks had been a charter member of the Bloomington Lodge, No. 159, of the I. O. O. F. when it was

instituted December 9, 1868. He became disenchanted with the Lodge as it became over the years ever more rigid and moralistic, pushing hard into areas Dr. Brooks thought inappropriate, like the temperance movement. Dr. Brooks was not an advocate of alcohol, and clearly recognized the consequences of inebriation, but he also felt that returning to the judgmental righteousness of the Puritan ethic was not the correct way to address the issue. Taking away the civil rights of people, he said, seldom leads to voluntary appropriation of the kinds of convictions that lead to desired change. He eventually left the organization.

What I came to understand from my discussions with Daisy is that Bloomington was basically an Anglo-Saxon settlement. This fact was born out to me in the very names of the farms in the area: the Thomas Harper farm, the Mose Lewis farm, the Luther Brown farm, the Preserve Albee farm. There were a number of fraternal organizations in Bloomington at that time, some of which seemed determined to outdo each other in their moral righteousness. There was the Lodge of the Grand Templars, the Sons of Temperance, the Order of Oddfellows, the Daughters of Rebekah, and the Blakes Prairie Agricultural Society. Two of these strong fraternal organizations active in Bloomington at that time had a stated mission of prohibiting alcohol: the Lodge of the Good Templars and the Sons of Temperance. There was also a strong Order of Oddfellows, with the accompanying Daughters of Rebekah. While their mission is the betterment of mankind, not prohibition per se, it is reasonable they would throw their weight behind efforts to eradicate the evils of alcohol. From what I could observe, the Salmagundi Club did not take an active role in prohibition except when alcohol interfered with the welfare of children. The thought of boisterous German Biergartens was undoubtedly a thorn for these Puritanical organizations. I did learn though, that there were Germans living in Bloomington before 1881 and while the area was still involved in wheat farming. It was around the turn of the century that the switch from wheat to dairy happened, and I think that was largely due to New Glarus, the Swiss colony, and its success marketing cheese. Here is a brief history of temperance events in Bloomington, gleaned from notices in the *Bloomington Herald* newspapers.

- June 28, 1883 The Bloomington Baseball team is arrested for violating Sunday blue laws.
- July 14, 1898 The Anti-Saloon League is formed in Bloomington.
- Sept. 4, 1902 A Curfew Ordinance is established – all children under the age of 16 must be off the streets when the curfew bell rings.
- November 19, 1903 There is a Temperance Service at the Congregational Church. The subject is “The Church and the Saloon.”
- August 2, 1906 Mrs. Carrie Nation of Guthrie, Oklahoma will deliver an address against alcoholic beverages at the fair on Thursday morning, September 13 at 10:30 in the amphitheater.
- April 8, 1909 the village votes to go dry. It stayed dry until April 3, 1935.

I do think that some of the progressive nature of Bloomington was a result of the Anglo-Saxon heritage from the New England pioneers. Much as I despise the jealous antipathy of Anglo Saxons to the Germans that allowed them to brutalize Germans during WWI, I do have to admit they brought beneficial developments to the areas they colonized. The Salmagundi Club is an example. In New York City the Salmagundi Club was an exclusively male bastion for the promotion of new artists. Some spunky women in Bloomington, perhaps ones denied admission in New York, decided to organize their own Salmagundi Club and dedicate it to whatever they wanted, which

was not only the library in 1908 and the Art Hall in 1910, but good works of varying nature. We do not know how the Salmagundi Club got to Bloomington, why it has been so strong over the years that it is still in Bloomington today, while many of the other clubs are gone. The original Salmagundi Club in New York is over 150 years old, dedicated throughout its history to the preservation of art, and currently

Notes From Neighboring Clubs

BLOOMINGTON — Guest day was observed by the Salmagundi club of Bloomington on Thursday at the Bloomington municipal building. The invited guests included the Cassville Woman's club, and Mrs. Sylvia Woodhouse and Mrs. Nelson Greenfield, Bloomington.

Mrs. O. P. Baldwin, president, conducted the meeting with Mrs. George Blanchard, chairman of the entertainment committee, presenting the following program: trombone solo, Margie Metcalf, and vocal solo, Margie Hochausen, pupils of Theodore Schadeberg.

Mrs. Karl Kleinpell, first vice-president of the State Federation of Woman's clubs, spoke on "Facing Another Year." Mrs. O. N. Brodt and Mrs. Louise Tornowske poured at the refreshment table. Among the guests present were George Blanchard, Bloomington high school principal; Mrs. Karl Kleinpell, Mrs. D. Stevens, president of the Cassville club; Mrs. Kenneth Holt, Mrs. Monroe Hope, Mrs. Ed Peterson, Mrs. Greany, Mrs. Homer Keene, Mrs. Carl Kuenster, Mrs. John Habermann, Mrs. Mattie Smith, and Mrs. Ben Bausch.

one of the 10 elite private clubs in New York. Until the 1970s it admitted no women. The Bloomington Club seems to have been only women, women devoted to a number of "good causes" through all the years. Newspaper articles in the Madison paper reported on the meetings in Bloomington, as we see here.

BLOOMINGTON—Plans for the annual guest day and banquet of the Bloomington Salmagundi club, to be held in the Municipal building on May 18, were made at the meeting on Apr. 20 at the home of Mrs. George Blanchard.

Committees for the banquet are: Entertainment, Mrs. Clarence Smith, chairman, Mmes. M. F. Bonn, Sadie Bailie, Daisy Brown, B. R. Bauman, and Ralph Hoskins.

Decoration and reception, Mrs. George Blanchard, chairman, Mmes. Pat Bartley, W. G. Hickok, George Hillery, and Louise Tornowske.

Food, Mrs. Jack Edwards, chairman; Mmes. Ora Brodt, Victor Edwards, Harley Starrett and Miss Bess Tornowske.

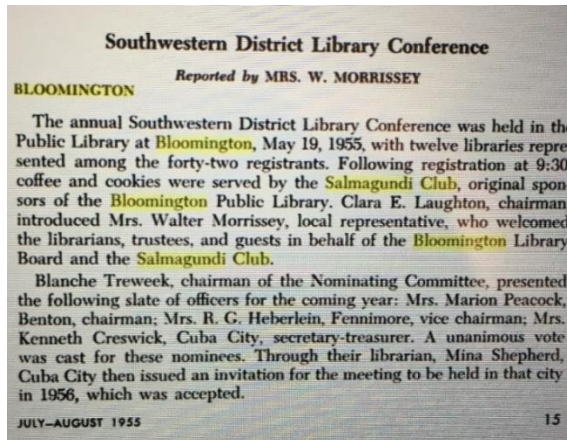
Pvt. Dolores Edwards, home on furlough from Hill Field, Ogden, Utah, gave a talk on her training in the WAC, and on her work as a court reporter in the base legal office. On her return, she is to work for the inspector general of the air service command.

Mrs. Clarence Smith, district chairman of the motion pictures committee, talked on motion pictures and their part in the war.

Sewing for the Red Cross occupied the remainder of the afternoon.

The first report on the left is from April 23, 1946, the middle one from April 30, 1944, and the one below is the report about the Bloomington Salmagundi Club hosting the 1955 Annual Southwest District Library Conference. There are also small local notices like this one about Club activities: "Mrs. B. R. Bauman read a paper on Easter in Many Lands. Then there was a business session and discussion of the various causes to which the Club had contributed." I was pleased to note that my second daughter, Patricia

Crubel Pohle, your aunt, was a member of the Salmagundi Club in 1976. A librarian in Bloomington wrote the brief history of the Salmagundi Club below.



“One of the most active civic groups in Bloomington during most of the 20th Century was a women’s organization called the Salmagundi Club. The name of the club, which was formed in 1901, is derived from the French word salmigondis, which means any mixture or assortment, a medley or a



potpourri. Although the club started out with discussions of literary topics, it soon branched out into a variety of activities and sponsorships. If it hadn’t been for the club, there would be no public library in Bloomington today. The Club was one of the co-sponsors of the biggest events to ever be held in Bloomington, the 1948 celebration of Wisconsin’s Centennial, which attracted nine to ten thousand people according to state police estimates. A Club member Daisy Brooks Brown also wrote a history

of Bloomington that year. Through the years the members have welcomed new teachers, held library tea fund raisers, learned about different countries of the world, helped promote the community, and tried to bring a little comfort and joy to others less fortunate.”

This is the Bloomington Art Hall the Club established, and this Hall was a source of great pride for me even though I did not help raise the money nor build it. How many small towns of 700 people have an Art Hall, I marveled. I wanted to join this Club after we were in Bloomington about a year, but I worried about whether my “German-ness” would be accepted. Daisy and I had several honest discussions about the benefits and limitations of the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic cultures, and she said the Club was supposed to be open to any woman “of good character” who wanted to join and would be willing to contribute financially to their several causes. Daisy offered to sponsor me, and so it happened that I became a member of the Salmagundi Club. The first thing I noticed is that the Club meetings were very genteel, conducted in strict and polite accordance with the club rules and regulations agreed upon. Voices were consistently low and modulated. I will be honest and report to you, Little Dear One, that sometimes I was quite bored and got sleepy. I would have welcomed a little lively discussion and maybe even a little arguing about things. I had thought they might be

interested in women's rights because the primary women's rights organization in the whole state of Wisconsin in the late 1800s was in Richland Center, 45 miles from Bloomington, and I thought they would take a stand on the temperance movement, but they seemed to shy away from bringing any controversy into the meetings. They did invite Ada James from Richland Center to talk about the Political Equity League, but they closed the meeting before there could be a discussion session. I did pick up some brochures Ada brought with her.



The library was always one of my favorite places in Bloomington, a true luxury in a small community, and a magical place to which I introduced my children as soon as they were ready. Not only was it a place to borrow books, but it was a never-ending source of information about so many topics and things. The idea of having a library in the village of Bloomington began back in 1874 when the *West Grant Advocate* newspaper reported "About \$300 has been subscribed for the Bloomington Library." In 1881, the Bloomington Library Association (a shareholder-type group similar to the Blake's Prairie Agricultural Society when it first formed), was located in rooms over the post office. That same year, the *Bloomington Record* newspaper reported that "Nearly a hundred volumes have just been added to the Bloomington Library." In March of 1883, the library moved from the F. J. Schell Store to the Woodhouse

& Bartley Bank, and Milton Woodhouse is listed as the librarian in July of that year. Since more than 15 years of the *Bloomington Record* newspaper are missing, it is not known how long the Library Association lasted. It was nonexistent in 1901 when the editor of the *Record* wondered why Bloomington couldn't have a public library.

On January 9, 1908, the Salmagundi Club, a Bloomington federated women's club formed in 1901, petitioned the village board to make an appropriation for the establishment of a free public library in Bloomington. The Club, especially its members Mary McIver and Nell Austin, organized and maintained the library, and club members held fund-raisers, donated books and took turns volunteering at the library for a number of years. The library, which the club began in a room at the Lance Music Store, soon moved to the old bank building on the north side of Canal Street, followed by a stay upstairs in the old J. B. Ludden building. Fortunately, the library had moved to the current Bloomington Floral location before the Ludden building burned. On November 4, 1914, the library had about 1000 books. The expenses for the year were \$200. The village paid \$100 of that expense.

When we first moved to Bloomington the library was mostly managed by volunteers, and the hours were limited. But it was in the library that I found little gems of information like this: "In 1900 odd numbers are the most prevalent in Bloomington. There are three churches, three drug stores, three blacksmith shops, three shoemaker shops, three doctors, three lawyers, three saloons, and one of the most uneven sidewalks one ever trod upon." I enjoyed the Mary Saggio 1881 *History of Grant County* despite the fact that over half of the history seemed devoted to lists of names of local club members or dignitaries. I also noted with interest that in 1881 the Lodge No. 159 from which Dr.

Brooks resigned, “has raised itself from small beginnings to a commanding position morally, socially, numerically and pecuniarily. The lodge has at present sixty-two members in good standing, and the Rebeccas twenty-six members.” This is indeed impressive when we realize the entire population of the village was just under 700 people. I did wonder if some of the members joined because they felt socially coerced!