

The first young men to be graduated from Beloit college, a struggling institution founded a few years before, received their diplomas in special exercises held in July of 1851. The trio, shown above, were Joseph Collie, William C. Hooker and Stephen D. Peet. The centennial class to receive diplomas Sunday afternoon will approximate 200 men and women.

Beloit's First Graduates, Three Men, Received Their Sheepskins a Century Ago

THERE'S an old saying indicating that in a hundred years, no one will ever know the difference. This hardly applies to Beloit college as it celebrates the 100th anniversary of its first graduation class at Commencement exercises on Sunday.

In 1851 the class was composed of three men, Joseph Collie, William C. Hooker and Stephen D. Peet. Mr. Collie went on to a distinguished career as a Congregational minister; Mr. Hooker was an influential lawyer; and Mr. Peet, son of Stephen Peet, one of the founders of the college, achieved fame as a clergyman, editor and anthropologist. The class passed out of existence with the death of Mr. Hooker in 1915.

Total Enrollment Was 17

In 1851, the faculty consisted of a president, the Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, and five professors. The college had a total enrollment of 17 students with the odd situation of having no junior class members.

The Beloit Journal, published on Thursday, July 17, 1851, gives this account of the first Commencement exercises:

"In the afternoon, the exercises were in the open air on the College grounds. The students acquitted themselves with credit, and their exercises evinced a thoroughness and completeness of tuition which would honor any of our older and better-known institutions.

"The assemblage, both at the church and the college grounds, was large, there being more strangers present than was anticipated, and our citizens very generally attending. There was probably more interest taken in the exercises from the fact that on this occasion the first senior class of the college was graduated. The number of seniors was only three, but it should be borne in mind that until last year the college has not in fact been perfectly organized, its professorships filled up, and fully prepared for business. But its stations are now all occupied by men of the highest character, its facilities for acquirement are excellent, and a bright career seems open before it."

Has Attained Envyable Record

Since this encouraging, yet humble, beginning, Beloit has attained an enviable record with its alumni. For example, the Dictionary of American Biography memorializes all outstanding deceased citizens. Only 63 of the 1800 colleges and universities have educated as many as ten of these notables. Beloit is in that select group, 20 of its former students having been listed. No American school, as young and as small as Beloit, has educated an equal number.

Beloit's record with alumni appearing in Who's Who in America is equally as good. More than 150 former Beloiters have been included and Beloit has always stood high among the 70 American institutions having the best "Who's Who" record.

From its faculty of five in 1851, Beloit now has eighty. From its student body of 17, Beloit now has close to 1,000. From its first senior class of three, Beloit will graduate approximately 200 on Sunday afternoon.

It hardly seems possible that any of the graduating class Sunday afternoon will say, "In a hundred years, no one will know the difference."

Long haul ends in style: Man buried in Corvette

By Alyssa Gabbay

Associated Press

IRWIN, Pa. — If there is a highway to heaven, George Swanson may get to the Pearly Gates in style: He was buried in his white Corvette.

Swanson's ashes were placed in the driver's seat — two driving caps in the back, red roses on the hood and only 27,000 miles on the odometer — and the 10-year-old car was lowered into his grave as 50 mourners looked on.

It already had been a long haul. Swanson died two months ago and cemetery officials balked at his request to be buried in the car in 12 plots he had purchased. They finally agreed.

"George always said he lived a fabulous life, and he went out in a fabulous style," his widow, Caroline Swanson, said afterward at a reception. "You have a lot of people saying they want to take it with them. He took it with him."

Swanson, a beer distributor who died March 31 at age 71, bought the plots in Brush Creek Cemetery in Hempfield Township, about 25 miles east of Pittsburgh, to make sure he and his beloved car would fit.

Cemetery officials, worried about vandalism and the prospect of offending other clients, relented

'You have a lot of people saying they want to take it with them. He took it with him.'

**Caroline Swanson
widow**

after weeks of negotiations. The cemetery insisted the burial be private, and the car was drained of all fluids to protect the environment.

A backhoe operator spent two hours digging the 7-by-7-by-16-foot hole. And a crane operator practiced hoisting and lowering the car Tuesday.

"You can't think of this as a car," cemetery caretaker Robert Miller said. "It's like a big fiberglass vault. It's just extra work, just a bigger grave to fill."

Funeral director John Ott was nonplussed at all the fuss.

"We handled it just like any other funeral," he said. "It's a different container, that's all."

Mourners stood in the rain for the short ceremony. Swanson, an Army sergeant during World War

II, left this world with other possessions he held dear: a lap quilt stitched by women at his church, a love note from his wife and his favorite Engelbert Humperdinck tape in the cassette with the song "Release Me" cued up and ready to play.

His license plate, HI-PAL — Swanson's signature greeting when he couldn't remember someone's name — went into the ground as well.

"He loved that Corvette," Caroline Swanson said. "He'd put the pedal to the metal. I can remember riding in it with him. He took me 120 miles per hour on the Amos Hutchinson Bypass."

She said he wanted to wind it up to 170, but she told him, "Not with me in it."

Caroline Swanson carried her husband's ashes to the cemetery in her white 1993 Corvette, at a more appropriate speed.

"I took him for his last ride," she said.

Mechanic Howard Butler said Swanson clearly had been planning his unorthodox send-off for some time. Butler said he tried to buy the '84 Corvette last year, but Swanson refused to sell.

"He said there was no point in burying a new Corvette," Butler said.

Car rams cemetery fence, woman suffers minor injury

An undetermined amount of property damage was done to a fence, three grave markers and a lawn at Oakwood Cemetery, 1221 Clary St., following a one-vehicle accident late Monday.

According to Beloit police, an eastbound car driven by Christine L. Partridge, 38, of 1300 Clary St., apparently left the north side of

Clary Street about 11:46 p.m., smashed through a cyclone fence, struck two small grave markers and hit a larger three-piece marker, where it came to rest, police said.

Ms. Partridge was treated and released at Beloit Memorial Hospital for a broken rib and facial cuts.

She was cited for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated.

Car crashes 9-8-74 into cemetery

A car crashed through the fence at Oakwood Cemetery early Sunday morning and caused an undetermined amount of damage to three grave markers.

Police said the 1973 Chevrolet was eastbound on Woodard Avenue when it failed to negotiate a curve, skidded sideways up over a curb striking the fence.

Five posts were pulled loose and the car came to rest against the gravestones.

The car was later reported stolen from the home of Lenzo Talton, 857 Elmwood Ave. Police are seeking the driver.

Head-on collision kills local woman

A 46-year-old Beloit woman was killed and 17-year-old youth remains in critical condition today after the cars they were driving collided head-on on the Milwaukee Road overpass bridge late Friday afternoon.

Killed was Joe Ann Licata, of 2133 E. Ridge Road. Officials said she died about one hour after arrival at Beloit Memorial Hospital from massive injuries.

The other driver, James Fitzgerald, of 719 Milwaukee Road, was also taken to Beloit Hospital and later transferred to St. Anthony's Hospital in Rockford with multiple head injuries. He remains in the intensive care unit following surgery.

Police said the accident occurred about 5:14 p.m. and gave the following account obtained from two witnesses.

Ms. Licata, driving a 1970 Buick Skylark, was heading west on Milwaukee Road in the left lane when Fitzgerald approached the bridge eastbound traveling at about 70 miles per hour.

Witnesses said Fitzgerald's 1971 Buick Electra began to swerve out of control and the vehicle's collided at the top of the bridge.

The impact pushed Ms. Licata into the back seat and pinned Fitzgerald in his car. Firefighters had remove him



(Daily News photo)

Wreckage of James Fitzgerald's 1971 Buick Electra.

with rescue equipment and he was reportedly unconscious and near death.

Police said department scuba divers were working under the bridge at the time searching Turtle Creek for items taken in a burglary when they heard the crash.

Ms. Licata was born on Feb. 11, 1934 in Mt. Vernon, Ill. the daughter of John and Mary Tobin. She married Sam

Licata on Sept. 11, 1954 in Mt. Vernon.

She was employed at Bryden Motors in Beloit and was a member of St. Paul's Catholic Church.

She is survived by her husband; three sons, Stephan of Beloit, Mark of Walnut Creek, Calif., and Shawn at home; one daughter, Gina (Mrs. Bradley) Clark of Beloit; four

brothers, Bernard of Joliet, Frank of Orland, Fla., Johnnie of Fostoria, Ohio, Gerome of Mt. Vernon; two sisters, Esther Cahill of Lenox, Mass., and Ellaretta Eyde of Nashville, Ill; and her parents.

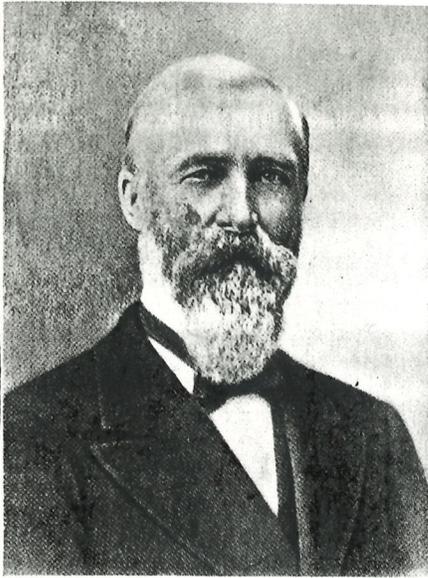
Services will be Tuesday at St. Paul's Catholic Church. Burial will be at East Lawn Cemetery. Other arrangements are pending.

74

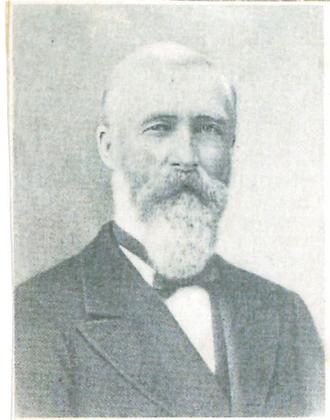


Associated Press

The 1984 Chevrolet Corvette containing the remains of George Swanson lies in a grave in Hempfield Township, Pa., Wednesday.



John Hackett married Cordelia Blodgett in Ohio and came to the Turtle in 1836 with his wife's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Caleb Blodgett. He was the new community's first merchant in 1837, its first postmaster in 1839, and built the first house on the west side of the river in 1842. It was a stone house where the high school now is. He gave St. Paul's parish the land where its church was built, served on the school board, owned farms, was real estate dealer, flour-mill operator, one of the founders of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co., a member of the Wisconsin Territorial Assembly 1840-42, member of Wisconsin's Constitutional Convention in 1846, and member of the legislature in 1852. He was an extensive property owner; he learned French when he was 40 to enjoy the literature of France; had a large private library. He died in 1886 at the age of 78. Mrs. Ella Hackett Adams is his daughter.



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10 - HACKETT.

John Hackett. 1-22-2,10
 Born Jan. 25, 1808.
 Died Feb. 5, 1886.

Sarah Cordelia Blodgett.
 Wife of John Hackett.
 Born Mar. 28, 1814.
 Died Mar. 7, 1854.
 1-22, 2, 9

George Hackett.
 Son of John and Sarah
 C. Hackett.
 Born Aug. 22, 1844.
 Died July 2, 1845.
 1-22-2, 8

1-22-1, 7
 Ella D. Adams. 1847--1936.
 John Russell Adams. 1850--1921.
 1-22-1, 6

Jeanette. Born Nov. 20, died
 1-22-1, 8 Nov. 27, 1874.
 Lawrence. Born Nov. 20, died
 Nov. 20, 1874.

(Children of J. & E.D. Adams.)

John H. Adams. 1874--1949.
 1-22-5, 5
 Jane Adams. 1874--1946.

1-22-5, 4

GROUT
DOLLIE A GROUT
DIED IN BELOIT
JAN. 17 1884
IN THE 21ST YEAR OF HER AGE

KATE C. GROUT
WIFE OF C. C. STODDARD
1830--1887

ABOVE IS THE INSCRIPTION ON A MONUMENT
IN THE OLDER PART OF OAKWOOD IT IS ABOUT
TEN FEET HIGH REPRESENTING A SHATTERED
TREE TRUNK WITH A YOUNG GIRL'S BELONGINGS
AT THE BASE - HAT?GLOVES BOOK FIELD GLASSES
THERE IS A ROMANTIC VICTORIAN CHARM ABOUT
THIS MONUMENT
HOWEVER THE STORY THAT SHE WAS KILLED BY
LIGHTNING IS CONSIDERED VERY DOUBTFUL



In this city, January 19, 1884, Miss Dollie Grout, aged 21 years. Miss Grout was a decided favorite in society, and her large circle of acquaintance was very large. In every way she was an estimable young lady, and many friends lament the death of one whom they so dearly loved, who has been called from the family and social circle so early in life.

Miss Kate (Dollie) Grout

(Beloit Newspaper January 21, 1884)

WILLIAM BARSTOW STRONG WAS BORN MAY 16 1837 IN BROWNINGTON VT. HIS FAMILY CAME WEST IN 1851 IN A SERIES OF RAPID PROMOTIONS WHICH CAME TO HIS ENGAGING PERSONALITY MR. STRONG BY 1881 WAS PRESIDENT OF THE SANTA FE RAILWAY. UPON RETIRING MR. STRONG CAME TO BELOIT TO LIVE ON A FARM STILL TO BE SEEN AT THE HEAD OF PRAIRIE AVENUE. MR. AND MRS. STRONG WERE GENEROUS DONORS TO BELOIT. THEY GAVE THE FIRST HOSPITAL IN THE STRONG BUILDING WHICH THEY LATER BUILT AS AN OFFICE BUILDING. THEY ALSO GAVE GRIDLEY CHURCH AND THE PARK PORTION OF OAKWOOD CEMETERY. MR. STRONG DIED IN 1914. A NUMBER OF STREETS, A CHURCH AND A SCHOOL TESTIFY TO PUBLIC REGARD FOR THESE GENEROUS PEOPLE.

151-23-3812

Obituary

William J. H. Strong

William J. H. Strong, 79, a former resident of Beloit and for many years a research and consulting engineer, died in Chicago at 10:15 p.m., Thursday.

Mr. Strong was the son of William Barstow Strong, who extended the Santa Fe railroad from a small prairie line in Kansas to a transcontinental system extending from Chicago to California. He had lived in Chicago for the last 35 years.

Mr. Strong leaves his wife, Martha L., a daughter, Mrs. Harry Nicholson, Akron, O., and three sons, the Rev. Kendrick Strong, Oshkosh, Robert C. Strong, Tsing-tow, China, and James A. Strong, Beloit. One son, William L., died in 1939.

Funeral arrangements have not been made.



● Henry Talmadge, who lived in Beloit from 1852 when he came here, a seven year old lad, with his parents, George S. Talmadge and Marie Briggs Talmadge, from Williamsport, Mass., until the year of his death, 1932, will probably be best remembered as he appeared down town in the last years of his life, always nattily dressed, and with his ever present button hole bouquet.



WIDOW.

NANCY BENNETT
Died

Feb. 16, 1857.

Ae. 81 Yrs.

(This would make
her birth year,
1776. She must have
come west with a
family).



The inscription on this stone reads as follows:-
George H. Mack. Born Dec.13,1829; died July 14, 1878.

The ornament on the stone is a weeping willow.
On Oct. 22, 1863, a young woman named Belinda Whitney, school teacher, was married at the Hyatt House, Janesville, by the Rev. Goodspeed, to George H. Mack of Turtle. The couple came to live in the Mack homestead still standing in a comparatively remote spot on the upper road along Turtle Creek to Turtleville. The house was originally built of native timber and covered with weathered oak, unpainted. Built in the simple, early American fashion, for years it had the melancholy appearance of a house from one of Hawthorne's romances. The couple kept two hired men and were known to often quarrel. Mrs. Mack was of a masterful disposition; they had three children. It was said that Mrs. Mack favored one of the hired men over her husband. One night, after a quarrel, Mrs. Mack is said to have hit her husband and to have compelled one of the men to help "finish him off," and after rolling him in the hog-pen, to have placed the body under the hoofs of a horse in the barn. After a celebrated trial, the two, Mrs. Mack and one of the hired men, were convicted and sentenced for life. The men were Orrin Dickerson and Joe Watsie. Mack had discharged Dickerson, who was 23 at the time and Mrs. Mack had re-instated him. She was 37 at the time. Dickerson, who at first pretended innocence, turned state's evidence. She was defended by Winans, McElroy, Eldridge, & Fethers of Janesville and S.J. Todd of Beloit, after being arrested and taken to the Goodwin House in Beloit, Jan. 10, 1879. This was one of the most celebrated bizarre events of early days. It is one of the most individual stones in Oakwood Cemetery, marking so terrible an event.

JOHN T. LEWIS. D.
Died
Nov. 25, 1862.
aged
73 years & 8 days

He was the
founder of the
village at the
cross roads,
Turtleville.

Asleep in Jesus,
Blessed sleep,
From which none
ever
Wakes to weep.



77

THE HODSON HOUSE. Turtleville.

Much that is inaccurate, especially as to dates, has been said and written about the Hodson house at Turtleville, a ruin which still intrigues the interest of the passer-by. William Hodson may have come earlier to America than the time when he emerged into prominence at Turtleville; and it would take perhaps exhaustive research to tell just when. It is said on the word of still living members of the Hodson-Lathers family connection that William Hodson came from England to Turtle about 1850. It may be that this date is incorrect and that he bought land at the Turtle site much earlier. But there was no one at the Turtleville site to live earlier than John and Abel Lewis, who came to live there and to found a business and a church, as early as 1839, at which date their names appear in the Milwaukee land office sales records. They were on the site in 1838. The name of Hodson, however, among landowners, is hard to find and the name does not appear on regular lists until 1873. To say that he was a "Whiskey rebel" does not give William Hodson much definite time location, because the troubles which the U.S. government had in collecting excise taxes on liquor were of long duration and in many regions of the west. It is known that by 1850, William Hodson was established in Turtleville. Old residents say that the Hodson house at Turtleville as we see it today was built by John Wheeler, who came to Beloit in 1855 and then moved to Turtleville, where for a time he was the only carpenter. He was the father of William Wheeler. Father and son and Richard Spencer and Albert Allyn all worked on this house, with lumber obtained and prepared at the site. In 1856, John Wheeler built the small Baptist Church, the first one in Turtle, for Deacon Abel F. Lewis, who furnished the money. It stood on the right side of the road on the small hill, west side of Turtleville bridge. This church congregation was begun as early as 1838, because the Lewises brought the church with them. Looking at these dates, we conclude that building went much more slowly in these days and that the Hodson house was not built in a day.

In 1851, it is known that Miss Angelina Beckwith, a cousin of Mr. Hodson, came to visit the family at Turtleville and stayed to become his Secretary. On March 8, 1859, Miss Beckwith married John W. Lathers, the pioneer Lathers in Turtle. The first town meeting of the Town of Turtle was held in a small stone schoolhouse which stood on the same hill as the little church, but farther up and was in existence at an early time, the first town meeting being in it, April 7, 1846. All of the above dates are authentic. Old residents can recall when much more of the Hodson plant was to be seen than is there now. The bricks of the tall chimney on the opposite side of the road were moved to build the Edw. Carpenter home, near the Hart School and the present home of Mr. Coleman. (1953).