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Part Two

The Wisconsin State Journal

Part Two

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The World's Most Beautiful Capital City

Completion of Nolen plan with its "organic relation between the new capitol and Lake Monona" urged by M.B. Olbrich as Madison's greatest need; would make land about shore line to be used as city park

Carrying out of idea suggests plan for fitting celebration of city and state's centennial; Madison's anniversary now but 15 years away; pays tribute to vision of John M. Olin; says city owes a debt to commonwealth

"Of all the cities in the United States, it appears to me that Madison has the best opportunity to become in the future * * * a model modern American city. It has the site, the environment, the climate, the population, the high civic spirit, the traditions, the permanent attractions of government and higher education. It lacks only the increase of wealth and population, which time will certainly and quickly bring, the co-operation of various public bodies, and a well-considered plan of city making which it is the purpose of this report to at least inaugurate. It is within the power of the people of Wisconsin to make Madison in the future what Geneva is today—a beautiful, well-ordered, free, organic city."

BY M. B. OLBRICH

With these inspiring words, John Nolen brought to a conclusion his classic monograph "Madison: A Model City." A full summary of his far reasoned recommendations need not be undertaken for its essentials are apparent from a glance at the sketches reproduced herewith. The one feature emphasized more than any other in his report is the "organic relation between the new capitol and Lake Monona."

A decade has gone by since he put into words a plan of civic development as noble as was ever suggested out of the divine heart of man.

WANTED: VIGOROUS AND INSPIRED CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Nine out of ten men met at random on the street with whom the project is discussed agree to the excellence of the idea, register their conviction that it is a "fine thing," "something that is bound to come," "but you and I will never live to see it" and virtuously conclude with a sigh "if we only had somebody like John M. Olin." That regret voices Madison's greatest need today—a courageous and inspired civic leadership. She needs a man or group of men possessed of the qualities with which Whitman endowed the poet "if the time become slothful and heavy, he knows how to arouse it * * * he can make every word he speaks draw blood. Whatever stagnates in the fat of custom or obedience or legislation he never stagnates."

Mr. John M. Olin furnishes, of course, the one notable and pre-eminent example of the qualities which the time demands. He circumvented the indifference, often the insolence, of arrogant and opinionated ignorance; "the aguros that patient merit of the unworthy takes," the pin pricks of petty jealousy, the chill of disappearing suspicion and all "the pains of the malcontent proffed at by his neighbors." But how nobly his experience demonstrates that if the taper of an unselfish and abiding enthusiasm be lighted but a little while, its clear white flame blazing through the mist and murk dispels the miasma of doubt and distrust. Long since the slavering drinks of the cynic carp and jeer have been shamed to silence. Fortune now grants him the privilege of hearing in their stead a generous praise. In the universal acclaim of his fellow townsmen he finds a reward ripe and full whose savor, the bubble reputation, the possession of "riches finless" or the humble office never could confer. As truly a civic hero as any knight of old, tribute cannot be paid him too often or with too great a wealth of greeting and filling words out of the depths of a city's grateful heart.

ARE WE EQUAL TO OUR OPPORTUNITY?

But our very proper admiration for him and his great work ought to find other outlet than mere talk. His example is a constant challenge to action. The tremendous impetus to better things imparted by his personality ought never to have spun itself out as soon as this. If one generation might not rightfully expect a second man so masterful, surely we need not confess ourselves so bankrupt in foresight, imagination and enterprise as to say that this day cannot produce a dozen men whose combined and initiative and energy should equal that of even the muchloved Olin. Yet cast up the sum of our progress toward a practical working out of the Nolen plan in the past ten years and how pitifully meager is the total of achievement. Our conduct almost suggests that we have misinterpreted the expression "Madison: A Model City" to mean that a great artificer of civic excellence had awarded us the palm of supreme distinction among cities and set the seal of his approval upon full and final accomplishment. But that his title was not selected in the vein of effusive compliment, this sentence in his report makes manifest "as a beautiful city Madison has a present tendency not upward but downward." Those words were true then. Unfortunately they are truer now.

GOD HAS DONE MUCH—MAN LITTLE

So far as Lake Monona and the most vital aspects of his plan are concerned, the saintly Bernard that "there is no place on earth for which God has done so much and man so little" still breaks and scars us with the scorn of truth. But had we sinned by omission only, the burden of our guilt were more supportable.

The history of city and state in relation to Lake Monona convicts us and those that have gone before us of a stupidity and a negligence that is nothing less than civic crime.

THE LAKE SPIRIT, MONONA, LOVELY FAIR

Carved after the very "cunningist pattern of excelling nature," "so lovely fair," Monona nestled within her bounds of hill and marsh and woodland. Providence surely was in a prodigal humor when she fashioned this miracle Monona. Here the poet might exclaim "was a site for a city which no other spot upon the continent could surpass." When he dipped his pen into the future to portray in prophecy the perpetual cycle of that miracle's expansion and renewal

"With firm, impassioned stress" M. B. Olbrich has tramped the shores of our lakes, mile on mile, when the morning dew bathed his soaking, dreaming over again the great dream.

On "Olin" Olbrich's table the legal documents are as dry as an easy ethert, but anywhere one is not surprised to find, shuffled among them, a volume of Whitman. A kind might sing on his window sill undisturbed by the typewriters, as though at home.

And so, however dead it may seem, "Madison—A Model City" lives on in the dreams of Mr. Olbrich and in the hearts of the people. In his vision the charioteering of this civic heir to nature's beauty is set for Madison's 100th anniversary.

Whatever else work are practical people, for the best things in life are dreams worked out. All great works are beautiful things which began as impossibilities before it, like dreams of them and worked them out. In "Madison—A Model City" that is precisely the service and service rendered by Mr. Olbrich to "Madison—A Model City." That is passing by while our complacent hurrits and stirks pile in new edifices and leave no asserting to the power that is in the plan as it leaves the picture he has drawn.—The Editor.

"A squalid succession of shacks and shanties.

"Sinuous southward and sinuous northward the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of the marsh to the
Folds of the land."

In ministry to man, he would sing of

"The sanguine sunrise with his meteor eye
And his burning plumes outspread."

blazing a message of hope and aspiration; would tell of that same sun's beams reflected as from a million diamond facets flashing the irresistible lure of her beauty straight into the adventurous eyes of childhood; would chant of the ever widening circle of her silver waters when the moon caressed her loveliness to the climax of a fairy dream and on her radiant surface underneath the canopy "where stars as large as lilies flecked the blue," lovers were lured to woo and plight their troth; would celebrate in deathless verse the story of man, toilworn, weary and old—he and his mate, to whom the ripple of every wavelet on her shore whispered the counsels of comfort, the detail that mock, and grief and chating disappointment were all of life. But never would he dream that the unfolding scroll of destiny would record that man himself, "like the base Indian cast a pearl away richer than all his tribe," or that his sacrilegious hand would ever be raised to break the eternal entail of Monona to the consecrated code of human happiness.

"A CISTERN FOR FOUL TOADS TO KNOT AND GENDER IN"

But even thus far has the course of our development drifted from the poet's dream. As if under compulsion of some monster of antique myth, across every thoroughfare leading from the city's heart, we consented to or conspired in the construction of a great loom of death across whose frame of steel are shuttled to and fro in constant oscillation the thunderous shuttles of destruction. Only upon the theory that death was a proper penalty for attempted use and enjoyment of the habitable heritage of these waters, can we account for the construction of the railroad tracks that disgrace our water front and humble our civic pride.

But there was at least a certain element of dignity in the stark nakedness of this gross affront to common sense, this brutal trampling underfoot of the rightful aspiration of decent civic life. But as if our shame were not complete, that saving element of dignity was sacrificed by the addition of the grotesque horror of a squalid succession of shacks and shanties. Even with their partial abatement, as if the horrors of our conduct must still "on horrors head accumulate" the cup of degradation already filled to the brim was set to overflowing and the priceless chalice of beauty and grace designed for love and adoration was transformed for entire seasons at a time into a cesspool of loathsome slime and stench—"a cistern for foul toads to knot and gender in." Her beauty assassinated "in the very eye" blinded, bedraggled, degraded the soul of Monona like some sentient thing means her agonized protest against the indignity she has suffered at the hands of man. A partial realization of the enormity of the offense should pale the pimpled rash of our civic conceit and settle care for all the perennial hiccough of our self-satisfaction.

THE TRINITY: AN IDEAL, THE PASSION TO SERVE, THE PATIENCE TO ORGANIZE

But merely to sit down in dejected municipal introspection and to moan and groan in public places over our sins and shortcomings and those of the fathers is no solution. Action, not lamentation, is the remedy.

"The burning will—the clear ideal—the patience to organize—these are the unconquerable trinity which can create a new world out of chaos today, tomorrow, at any time."

If all the superlatives were shaken from the dictionary and strewn across the retinal face with a sandblast hand, no more effective statement of the great ideal would result than is found in Nolen's plain and simple words: "The Monona Lake Front improvement might very readily, and at relatively low cost, too, be better than anything of the kind that has so far been done in this country; in fact, when we consider the situation and size of the capitol, the character of the proposed group of buildings and the exquisite natural beauty of Lake Monona, it is not too much to say that this waterfront esplanade, a mile and a half in length, might equal any similar development anywhere in the world."

"BEAUTY IS ITS OWN EXCUSE FOR BEING"

On the basis of present reproduction cost the grounds and building of the state capitol represent an investment ranging from fifteen to twenty-five million dollars. If we assume and that it would now require three million dollars to make the extension to the lake and to provide a proper setting for this architectural triumph, the expenditure would be simply justified on the score of beauty alone even though the land were to be entirely idle. Ruskeen wrote truthfully when he said "Every man values every acquisition he makes in the science of beauty above his possessions. The most useful man in the most useful world so long as only commodity was served would remain unsatisfied. But as fact as he sees beauty life acquires a very high value." If this be not so, what stupendous folly it was to invest a million and a half of dollars in the great dome that symbolizes the majesty and grace of this proud state. How grossly wasteful was the failure to cap the capitol park into building lots and sell ground enough to build a row of stinky office buildings to house the public officials of a people without inspiration and without soul.

AN ARCHITECTURAL HODGE-PODGE

The beauty of the scheme admitted it is still urged that it is utterly impracticable and impossible of achievement. That view does not represent a well matured conclusion. A great leader once said of the idea "It is the most foolish idea I ever heard of." In less than a year talking of the same subject to the same person he expressed a diametrically opposite conclusion. His experience is typical of all who really think about the matter. The easy and superficial way is to dismiss it as the grandiose conceit of a dreamer's idle fancy or fevered aberration, but if we once think in terms of a great prosperous commonwealth when it shall have attained a population of ten to fifteen million people and adjust our perspective to the housing needs of its government, then even though we must rely upon the shamefaced alibi of utility, the substitution of six distinctively beautiful public buildings for the architectural hodge-podge that lies between the capitol and the lake, ceases to be a mere matter of sentimental extravagance.

But we need not wait for a five fold increase of population. The completed capitol is not yet five years old and as Nolen anticipated the requirements of our government already overflow their present accommodations and the state now occupies rented quarters labelled "Capitol Annex." Let ten years more go by and unless we yield soon to the compelling urge of common sense how shockingly necessity will trample on the heels of sluggish initiative.

COOPERATION OF GOVERNMENT UNITS POSSIBLE

But the entire burden need not rest upon the state. The railroad government has already taken steps to pre-empt one of the blocks in question for a Federal building. The city by popular vote has sanctioned the construction of a new city hall. By tie and state there has been agitation for a municipal auditorium and an armory. All of these civic needs might advantageously be provided for in another block. In this connection we should not overlook the fact that Madison is a county seat as well. Without in any way seeking to lay down a definite program or to make detailed arrangement, might not these four units of government conspicuously to work out a set of buildings affording the charm of unity of design, utility and convenience and without the imposition of an undue load upon the taxpayers who ultimately feel the bill.

A CHALLENGE TO MADISON'S CIVIC VISION

As Nolen has already pointed out the only hope for a full realization of his plan lies in action by the state. But it does not follow by any means that this community can absolve of all responsibility. To be truthful we must admit that the lions share of benefit and enjoyment to follow this development would come to the people of Madison. In this very fact lies a special obstacle to success. It is popular throughout the state to think of Madison as a sort of robber community, unwarrantably located at the intrance of Wisconsin life taking toll from the remainder of the commonwealth and giving nothing of solid worth in exchange. Whether we deserve the reputation is quite beside the point. It may be a just or a very unjust judgment, but no plan of effective action can leave out of account the existence of this feeling. No legislature is likely to move in the matter until Madison demonstrates in a much higher degree than she yet has done the integrity of her civic purpose and the breadth of her civic vision.

The Nolen plan in its relation to Lake Monona suggests a ring in which the fringe of drive and park that skirt the water's edge form the bezel, the proposed extension the setting and the capitol itself a massive jewel that glorifies the completed whole. It seems a natural division that if the state provides the jewel and the setting that Madison, at least, furnish the ring. If this be done and we are able to point to solid achievement in furtherance of the plan, particularly by the establishment of a park area beginning with Spaight street and ending with Monona park, how inevitable it seems that the state must take the steps needful to complete the integral whole by connecting the capitol park with the development provided by the city at the foot of Monona Avenue. Until we have done this let us cease to importune the legislature to open its conveniences and answer benefaction on us. Let the city move then without further delay and take some decisive step in carrying out that portion of the Nolen plan which properly belongs to it.

PUBLIC HEALTH—ONE BASIS OF IMMEDIATE ACTION

The city has even less excuse for delay than the state. Laying all considerations of beauty entirely out of account if public health be the economic asset that we profess to believe, from a purely utilitarian standpoint, we should act at once. The city has expended approximately twenty-five hundred dollars for an investigation of conditions in Lake Monona thought to menace the public health. The report of Messrs. Burdick and Alvord gives prominence to the following recommendation:

"We suggest for the future that great public improvement of the shores all along the city front can be obtained by adding to the park system of the city a strip of made land outside of the present railroads and existing shore line. This improvement can be accomplished at no reasonable cost the dredging material from the edges of shallow water, and so deepening the lake as to prevent the nuisance arising from the shallow water and weed growth. The dredged material can be deposited so as to create a strip of land for an outer drive or park with suitable shore protection, which can be readily kept free from the decaying decoma, and, at the same time, create a park addition, which will add to the beauty of Madison's lake front for all times to come."

Our own good sense told us to do this all the while. Now that our opinion is buttressed with that of experts qualified to sit in judgment as to the requirements of public health, we may safely follow our natural instinct for the attainment of beauty to which we should have yielded long ago.

In addition to considerations of public health, the present city engineer suggests that the area for dumping the accumulated waste of our streets is so fast disappearing that in the near future the problem of a place of disposition in an economical and convenient manner is likely to grow acute. He suggests that the city should acquire the riparian rights outside the railroad tracks to make provision for a dumping ground. His able predecessor in that office, states that the time will come, and speedily, when provision must be made for a low grade or level highway across which our heavy traffic may be transported so as to avoid the hills within the city proper and relieve the congestion upon the present city streets. Such highway would find its natural place either just inside or outside the present railroad tracks and would not in any way interfere with the full development of the plan.

WHERE SHALL WE BEGIN?

So far as the shores of Lake Monona are concerned, the time is quite as opportune, if not more opportune, than ever before. Outside of the intrusion of a number of homes in the vicinity of the lake at the mouth of the Tahara, which Nolen had set aside for a park to correspond with Tenney Park on Lake Mendota, there has been no material development inconsistent with his plan. Private initiative has completed the filling of the Greenland Plat. There is not a residence immediately upon the lake shore all the way from the Tahara River to the former Porter residence in the Town of Blooming Grove. Monona Park

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2 Sunday, May 8, 1921. THE WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

URGES COMPLETION OF THE NOLEN PLAN

M. S. OLBRICH SUGGESTS CARRYING OUT OF MODEL CITY SCHEME AS ANNIVERSARY EVENT

(Continued from page 1.)

has been acquired and represents a distinct improvement and addition to his plan. The establishment of a park in the area now under discussion lying upon both sides of Starkweather creek would more than compensate for the lost opportunity near the Yahara river. The writer has believed that here lay the logical starting point for the furtherance of the united plans.

"Whether the immediate requirements of the population adjacent and the practical absence of park facilities, perhaps, under all the circumstances, this extension is most immediately desirable. But whether we begin there or

"Running southward and skirting northward the shimmering band of the sand-beach furthers the fringe of the search for the fickle of the mind.

whether we develop Speight Street Park or whether we begin immediately opposite the heart of the city is not so important as it is to actually and earnestly begin somewhere the work of redeeming Lake Monona. Wherever the start is made it should be with the definite intention that it will not be for the purpose of a single improvement, but that it is merely a step in the development of a much more ambitious and united project.

HAVE WE THE "BURNING WILL?"

Is such a program feasible for the city? Surely so long as we have the ingenuity to tumble dirt down hill or pump muddy water out of the lakes, we should be able to do the task need not decree us. The sole question left to do we possess "the burning will" that's why the patience to organize?

WE CAN AND WE WILL.

No one can come intimately in contact with the citizenship of Madison without being impressed with its hearty, immediate and even, generous response to demonstrated public need. Madison is right. "The high civic spirit, the love of beauty, the public pride and a little energy to kindle it, will the social mass is alive all through with fires of high devotion.

Dull and sluggish indeed must be the imagination that does not quicken and thrill at the thought of our great ideal realized. It is no cheap or common goal that has been set before us. The consummation beholds nothing lower or less than making Madison the most beautiful city in the world. Generosity is challenged to vie with generosity for the attainment of this lofty end. To-day is the glory of all and its beauty and inspiration remain just to our children and our children's children, for a thousand, thousand years to come.

The one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the City of Madison is but fifteen years away. How can we celebrate that event more happily than by commemorating after the full, adequate and generous discharge of our duty, the completed redemption of Lake Monona?

In 1846 if the predictions of Senator Vilas and Mr. Nolen are brought true to a fairly realization, Madison will be a community of a hundred thousand souls. Is it ill-considered optimism to suggest that date as appropriate for the full realization of the Nolen plan in all its fine, high perfections? Can the human imagination conceive a more fitting and triumphant memorial to mark a commonwealth's centennial than the final transformation of the glorious vision into the reality of "Madison: A Model City?"

FOUR VIEWS OF THE PROPOSED MEMORIA LPARK WHICH SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF MADISON COMMON COUNCIL WILL VISIT TODAY

Four views of proposed Memorial park on Lake Monona which special council committee will visit today.

FROM A READER'S NOTEBOOK

IF YOU live on a farm set up your own wireless and get all the agricultural information you need—from weather forecasts to crop reports.

Such a daily radio-marketgram service will soon be available to every farmer or grange that will install a simple wireless receiving set, which costs from $15 to $75. The Department of Agriculture will furnish the information. The Post Office Department will send the information broadcast through the air—small radio stations scattered over the country. This service will make it easy for the farmer to decide, for instance, when to cut hay. Also, when to sell his grain, etc.

Whether you are a farmer or not, this is news that reaches into your everyday life—because it suggests some of the startling changes that may soon be brought about by wireless. The time may not be far off when a business man will have a wireless receiving apparatus in his office. Then, when he leaves the train rushes almost the very instant that occur, whether he is in a city or 1000 miles from a town. The time may come, within your life time, when many housewives in Madison will receive daily through wireless telephone, such things as food prices, weather forecasts and even fashion tips.

* * *

The railway executives are hopeful over explaining why, in spite of increased rates and government guarantee money, the railroads are slipping farther and farther

WHY THE OLD COW DIED

organizations sound like the speech of the rural lawyer in the justice of the peace court.

"Your honor," he declaimed, "if the train had been running as she should have been ran; if the bell had been rung as it should have been rang; if the whistle had been blown, as it should have been blew; both of which they did neither, the cow would not have been injured when she was killed."

* * *

Consider the case of Thomas Smith Jefferys, a plain four miller, the 97th anniversary of whose death is being observed with much honor at York, S. C.

Did Jefferys write a good book? Or paint a famous picture? Or make a career in politics? Not much. All he did was invent a simple little device.

WORLD NEEDS MORE SIMPLE IDEAS

Jefferys got his golden idea in 1823 when South Carolina was one of the leading wheat states, just as it now ranks high in cotton.

Jefferys' four flour was always shipped in barrels. No one ever thought of using sacks. Jefferys was a flour miller. A big order came in one day when there was a shortage of coopers and he couldn't get barrels.

Did Jefferys hold up shipments? He did not. He bought cotton sheeting and had his wife make flour sacks.

Jefferys was the first man to ship flour in sacks. That saved money. That saved money. It made him rich. His idea was adopted all over the country. Today, long after his passing, he is famous all through the milling trade and in his home town.

The world needs more simple and helpful ideas, such as using sacks instead of barrels for shipping flour.

* * *

Some practical economists investigating the instruments of national defense are as impressive as those of war.

The review of the Atlantic fleet at Hampton Roads the other day took on such significance when, after spectacular preliminaries, WHAT OUR NAVY STANDS FOR President Harding made it the occasion to re-dedicate the navy to "peace wis honor."

The president's rostrum was the fighting deck of the dreadnaught Pennsylvania. There under the frowning guns and steaming pennants, after his first official appraisal of the armada, he talked to admiral and gob alike.

"The United States does not want anything on earth that does not belong to it," the president said, "no territory, no payment of tribute. But we do want what is righteously ours—and by the eternal we mean to have it!

"I wish we might never be compelled to fire a gun in war * * * but I would not want peace without honor. I want to join with you in providing a navy adequate to the righteous and upholding defense, and to that program every patriotic American unfailingly subscribes."

That was the kind of ammunition the commander in chief placed in the navy's magazine alongside the ordnance and the steel, at the conclusion of the first grand assembly of the Atlantic squadron since 1918.

There is a palpable wisdom about it. Great navies which President Wilson could not have failed to arouse in the line find past the Mayflower with booming salute, and when half the country's sea fighting machinery lay at anchor about his yacht.

It is thrilling and sobering, and not even the saltiest skipper is immune to a swelling of pride. Starting quite apparently was shrewd to be made the occasion for such a display of the flagship and pennants, he shakes hands with officers and to eat, he forget all about luncheon and talked.

That tells of the president got over to officers and men his conception of their relationship to the guns, and, aside quite-definite to the gob the reason he mans the American battleship.

And it was accounted to the world, also, President Harding's conception of what those ships, as the "first line of defense" stand for.

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