

Re-discovering ILLINOIS

by LESTER B. COLBY
ILLINOIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

By Lester B. Colby (Illinois Chamber of Commerce)
More than three and a half million sewing machines have been manufactured in Belvidere. Here in this Illinois city of 8,500 inhabitants, up near the Wisconsin state line, the first electric family sewing machine ever built was made. Here the first machine of the modern "console" type was built. Here the first family sewing machine using two spools, thus doing away with the bobbin, was manufactured.

When I was a little boy on an Illinois farm—and that's some time ago—I knew but one fact about Belvidere. I knew that sewing machines were made there. The output has grown since then. Today the capacity of the National Sewing Machine company is 500 machines a day.

To All the World
These machines go out to the entire civilized world. Last year they were shipped to thirty-eight nations, not counting the islands of the seas! Some years sales are much larger than others. I have always been curious. I asked about that and an official of the company said:

"Two things very largely govern the sale of sewing machines. They are prosperity and the kind of clothes women wear."

And it developed that the passing of the skirt has hurt the sewing machine business. When women wear layers of skirts there was much more home sewing. Silk stockings and the scant, filmy, modern factory-made step-ins and the ready-made gauzy intimate things, have laid a penalty upon the sewing machine industry. Yet it continues to prosper.

And today, with artistry going into the home, we are demanding machines that are good to look upon, machines that in reality are pieces of handsome furniture. Utility today is not all.

Manufacturing Center
When you go to Belvidere, in the center of a rich agricultural country, thick with fine farms, you will be surprised at the manufacturing center that has grown up there. The industries of Belvidere have developed largely around precision machinery.

Belvidere is a place in which hundreds of large manufacturers "farm out" special jobs. Leading in this work are the sewing machine company and the Belvidere Sewing Machine Co. I was told that parts for every well-known make of American automobile, except one, have been and are being made in one or both of these plants.

These are generally parts that require great exactness, fine skill and precision in measurements. They are things like needle-valves, fine screws and delicate parts of speedometers. Some single orders have run into millions of pieces. The jobs come because these plants, with their veteran workmen, can turn them out in quantity with great exactness. But other things are made, also. Grey-iron castings and metal stamped goods. The Parsons Casket Hardware Co. makes metal parts and ornamental accessories for coffins. A visit to this plant shows that we, as a nation, are burying fortunes in gold and silver with our dead. The gold and silver is used to plate the casket ornaments, handles and other parts.

Other Industries
Other industries in Belvidere include artificial flowers, corsets, radio sets, computing scales, milk bottle tops, metal polishes, wax polishes, canned goods and industrial alcohol. Belvidere is the home of the original plant of the Gossard Corset Co. Seven plants are now in operation in various cities in a number of states.

Styles, it must be admitted, have put a heavy hand, too, on the corset industry. You do not need to go far afield to verify that. But the industry moves on for all women cannot be thin and shapely. Besides, a light athletic corset is in demand and the modern wife, instead of incasing herself in a stiff suit of mail, if she can afford it, is now buying two or three or more different models of corsets for a variety of wear.

Small incidents sometimes develop into interesting and important things. Take the case of Mrs. Coralyn Tefft and her artificial flowers. Mrs. Tefft once ran a millinery shop in Belvidere. One day she wanted a certain kind of flower for a certain kind of hat and couldn't buy it. So she made one. Looking upon it she remarked, "It's good, I believe I could sell five flowers like this."

Today she is manufacturing a large variety of flowers out of silks and metal cloths and dainty fabrics. They are hand-tinted, and demand good prices. Jobbers and wholesalers in New York, Chicago and the Pacific coast take them in large quantities. She ships to far countries, even to Australia and China.

In season she sometimes employs from forty to fifty girls and women. Her work rooms are a riot of gay colors, pastel shades and delicate hues.

Fine Farm Lands
Five thousand acres of the finest farm lands around Belvidere are operated by the Koehn-Belvidere Canning Co. This company specializes in canned sweet corn and peas. Farms are leased from the owners at an

average rental of \$10 per acre on a five-year term. The first year the company spends \$19.50 an acre for fertilization. Its output is more than 4,000,000 cans a year.

But that is not all. One of the main sources of profit is beef. Cattle are bought in the St. Paul and Winnipeg markets and fattened here. All by-products of the cannery are fed, vines, husks, cornstalks, etc. The company feeds as many as 1,800 cattle at a time. The point is that if a bad year comes and the company no more than breaks even in its canning it can pay dividends with the profits from feeding.

Employing this method the company has paid dividends regularly for seventeen years. Before that the cannery had failed under three managements.

Marshall Brothers also have an industry based on agriculture. They have a large plant for feeding sheep and lambs. Sheep and lambs on the way to the Chicago market from the west are taken from the trains here and fed for from three days to a week. Thus put in good condition they bring better prices at the stock yards.

Last year this company fed 40,000 lambs. Illinois farmers also come here to buy. Farmers bought 22,000 lambs in 1926 in Belvidere. It is claimed that they can save about one dollar a head if they buy here rather than in Chicago. That is what freight, yardage, commission, etc., would cost them if the lambs passed through the Chicago yards.

The sheep feeding yard in Belvidere is the second largest in the United States. The largest yard is also in Illinois; in an adjoining county.

Another plant in Belvidere is a first aid to dairying. The Mid-West Bottle Cap Co. makes paper tops for milk bottles, 2,000,000 a day. The paper tops are cut, printed and packed all with automatic machinery. This plant makes more milk bottle caps than any other plant between Chicago and the Pacific coast and is the fourth largest of the kind in the United States.

Another plant, the Belvidere Garment Co., specializes in one-piece play suits for boys, from 2-year sizes up. It sells to merchants by mail. Texas is its largest sales field.

And now comes Bill Bowley. Belvidere's story can't be told without mentioning Bill Bowley. A few years ago there was considerable waste land along the bottom of the Kishwaukee river which runs through Belvidere. It was a jungle of undergrowth and weeds—partly overflow land. A man could not go through the tangle except by backing his way. It was a breeding ground for mosquitoes and full of smells.

Bill, who is county clerk, got an idea. He set out to make a park of it. Today he has 120 acres of beautiful park with lagoons and wildfowl in it. People come from miles around to enjoy the park. Sometimes in the summer as many as 5,000 persons in a day have played here. Motor tourists look upon it, and the tourist camp that has been built up, as an oasis in their travels.

Nobody has ever thought of paying Bill for his work. It's his labor of love and the joy he has in it is pay enough. I found Bill down in the park with a gang "fixing" things. Bill carries a police star and I asked him if he had any trouble keeping the kids from busting things up.

"Never," said Bill. "Why, I buy chewing gum by the carton. I get it in box-lots. Buying chewing gum for the kids is cheaper than hiring a policeman. It gets better results, too."

So that's the way of Bill with the kids. Maybe we can all learn something from Bill. When you go to Belvidere drop in at the park. Talk with him about parks and kids. You'll get something worth while out of it. He thinks Bill does a good job.

WHO WAS THE FIRST LIFE SAVER KNOWN?

Can you answer this one? Who was the first life saver? Why, Cassius, the Roman general and history maker of the first century B. C., you might say off-hand. And you get 100 for the answer. Cassius rescued Caesar, the conqueror and dictator, from the rushing currents of the Tiber river when Caesar was overcome in a swimming race, as recorded in Shakespeare's historical play, Julius Caesar.

In originating "swimming for two" the father of life saving set a precedent which has been keenly developed through the ages. Now, his methods are obsolete. From the old "knock-out" method of subduing a drowning person, gentler and safer means have evolved. Rolling the unconscious water victim over a barrel has given way to artificial respiration.

All the latest developments in life saving and swimming, as well as diving, boating, and aquatic programs, will feature the courses of study at the Red Cross life saving institute, to be held June 16-25 at Lake Lawn, Lake Delavan, Wisconsin.

Life guards, physical directors, camp councillors, and Boy and Girl Scout leaders are attending the institute, whose aim is to make "everybody a swimmer—every swimmer a life saver."

A Massachusetts man dancing the Black Bottom threw his knee out of joint. Who says that the Yankees are unemotional?

NO MOTORCYCLE COPS FOR SHERIFF'S USE

Contrary to the general belief there will be no motorcycle officers working out of the office of Sheriff Lawrence A. Doolittle this summer, it was learned Tuesday. Sheriff Doolittle said that although he needs a motorcycle policeman he will not make a request of the board at this session, to provide an appropriation. He says he has been informed by the finance committee that the county must continue to retrench in expenditures.

Sheriff Doolittle regrets that lack of funds will not permit the hiring of motorcycle policemen. He says at least two men are needed out in the county to patrol the roads during the summer months when traffic is heavy. Drunken drivers cause many accidents and if motorcycle policemen are on the job, it would be possible to arrest these drivers many times before accidents result.

Coney Island is to become the Democratic Mecca in New York during the coming summer. Governor Smith must remember to give the board of boardwalk and directly to the White House.

BIDS RECEIVED FOR MUCH HIGHWAY WORK

Bids for the construction of approximately 132 miles of concrete highways have been received by the Division of Highways, Department of Public Works and Buildings. Contracts will be awarded with a checking of the bids, and work will start immediately.

Counties to be benefited are: Greene, Tazewell, Peoria, McLean, Clark, Coles, Will, Cook, DuPage, McHenry, Fulton, Henry, Putnam, Woodford, Ford, Livingston, Jasper, Madison, St. Clair, Crawford and Sangamon.

Bids were also received on grading in Pike, Scott, Kane, Cook and Sangamon counties, and on bridges in Clark, McHenry, Morgan and Woodford counties.

Admiral Sims says that the battleship is obsolete as a fighting craft but it still gives us a comfortable feeling to know that Uncle Sam has a flock of them around.

The fellow who always refuses to give anything for foreign missions is now going around with a virtuous, I-told-you-so look on his face.

Telephone Kildare 2499
PROGRESS TILE CO.
(Not Inc.)
CERAMIC FLOORS
FLOOR and WALL TILE
MANTELS and GAS LOGS
6111 Waveland Ave. Chicago

Spring and Summer
Dancing Season
Here
See Us for Hot, Peppy Music
Pompeian Jazz Kings
(Formerly Druggan Cowboys)
Phone Northbrook 73

Our Cleaning Service

Is all inclusive—every thing from a pair of gloves to household furnishings

Duffy & Duffy

CLEANERS AND DYERS
Telephone Highland Park 1820 - 1821

Highland Park Transfer and Storage Co.

P. H. PRIOR, Manager
one of the
Iredale Fireproof Warehouses
EVANSTON — WINNETKA — HIGHLAND PARK

MOVING—PACKING—SHIPPING
Baggage and Freight Transfer
STORAGE

374 Central Avenue, Highland Park Telephone Highland Park 181-182

It's Time to Retire

We have built up our business with

Fisk Tires

You can build your mileage and reduce your tire expense by using them. Have them put on now before the Spring and Summer driving season starts.

Steffen's Auto Supply

522 Central Avenue, Highland Park
Telephone Highland Park 350

Permanent Waving

Special prices for a limited time only.

The Nestles Circuline Process for perfect waving. Our waving gives depth and softness which can only be effected by skilled operators.

We offer a complete service in beauty culture. In our hair-cutting department all the latest styles of hair cutting for Men, Women and Children.



The Vanity Beauty Shop

6 North Sheridan Road Phone Highland Park 936

FUR STORAGE

When you bring your furs to us for storage you know they will be safe, for they go into a vault, built into our building, and they are insured against fire, burglary and moths. We also call your attention to the fact that we do remodeling, repairing, refitting and relining.

Highland Park Furriers for 15 Years
MOLDANER & HUMER
Moldaner & Humer Building
16 North Sheridan Road Telephone Highland Park 54