

The Paris of Bossier Parish

Written by Ann Middleton

Wednesday, 26 September 2012 08:31 -

A correspondent of *The Shreveport Times* submitted a tongue-in-cheek article about Bellevue in Bossier Parish to his paper's January 18, 1883 edition.

“Bellevue is the Paris of Bossier Parish. Forty years ago, where now didalian [!] streets wind in several directions, the virgin forest stood unmarred by the merciless hand of civilization. Beneath its broad foliage the timid deer roamed, chewing serenely its cud, not dreaming of the hound or the breach-loading shotgun, nor starting with fear at the distant echoes of the huntsman's horn. But, ah! What magic time has wrought; what stupendous and Titan-like waves of progress have swept o'er this world in forty years! Standing in the moonlight by the vast (huge) columns of the magnificent cathedral on Main Street, known as the Union church, with great effort St. Sophia and the Pantheon are called to mind. Yet, like him who built the Ephesian temple, the erector of this edifice is not known, his name worn off where once proudly he raised a scaffold to paint it, and his work often desecrated by the cussed little ragamuffin, who stands at long range with his [gun] and sends a bullet through the window pane. Forty years ago who would have imagined this edifice, with its robust pillars, standing where it now stands?”

“Immediately after the war Bellevue was famed for the big games of poker played, the frequent homicides and the brilliant balls which the enterprising citizens gave. For its size it was the Monaco of Louisiana, and supported a large floating population. Mania a potu [insanity arising from the use of spirituous liquors], the duello [the code for dueling], and a large conflagration which destroyed all the gaming houses, had a tendency to decrease this population; so at the present none of the outward glory of years ago is visible, save in sporadic game now and then. Its modern notoriety, you might say, is for good whisky, enjoyable dances and a Sunday school. Years ago when the writer of this was a Sunday school lad he recollects that quite an excitement was produced by the organization of a Sunday school. It did not last long. The superintendent, now a distinguished lawyer of this place, couldn't stand the racket. The boys did such tall swearing just before and after recitation, a habit they had acquired by frequenting gaming places, that he resigned in despair. In extenuation of his folly in attempting such an innovation, I will say that he had not been a citizen long, and perhaps thought that the surest way to success was the old, old dodge, reputation for piety. He has since worked up a lucrative practice, and I believe is superintendent now, but the pious and meek look on Sunday is thrown away during the week, and the keen, shrewd and practicable man of the world appears. Before closing this brief reminiscence or retrospection, I will state that Bellevue is a high-tone place, the proof of which is the reputation for good whisky.”

This article will be continued in next Wednesday's edition. You will want to find out about the “Big Ball” in Bellevue.

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Ann Middleton is Director of the Bossier Parish Library Historical Center. She can be reached at (318) 746-7717 or by e-mail at amiddlet@state.lib.la.us