

14

BELLAIRE, HOW IT GOT THIS WAY.

If the Redstone rocket fired from Cape Canaveral on May 5, 1961, had been directed to a target $80^{\circ} 44' 30''$ ^{West of Greenwich} ~~North of the equator~~, $40^{\circ} 01'$ ^{North of The Equator} ~~West of Greenwich~~, at an elevation of 667 feet above sea level, and 35 air miles south, southwest of Pittsburgh, Pa., and across the river from Benwood, W. Va., Alan B. Shepard, Jr., might now be celebrated as the first U. S. astronaut to land on the front steps of the City Building, in Bellaire, Belmont County, State of Ohio--might, that is, if the capsule in which he shot through space had been as nearly on target as it was in landing on the bosom of the Atlantic within reach of the carrier Lake Champlain.

That about locates the subject of this evening's paper and accomplishes the purpose to do so without any reference to what, if anything, may have impelled distinguished gentlemen to select it. An extenuating circumstance exists in favor of their judgment. The published program in which it was announced is dated October 1, 1959, and it appears therein well toward the end of their list, indicating, it may be, that they, like the available subjects, were well-nigh exhausted. Whatever the fact, the challenge to locate Bellaire without the usual orientation to the larger and better known city of Wheeling, W. Va., has been met.

Bellaire has had history and it does have a prospect, notwithstanding its situation down stream and five miles south from the center of Greater Wheeling.

over the B. & O., Benwood to Bellaire over the river, Central Ohio across Ohio, Indiana Central to Indianapolis, thence south. Interruption and delay in transportation between Benwood and Wheeling during the period demonstrated the need for a railroad bridge; the need induced the erection of a structure, next in widespread prominence but more enduring than the House that Jack Built. Before the war ended in 1865 promoters had obtained an agreement between the Baltimore and Ohio and the Central Ohio to share the cost of the construction, two-thirds and one-third, respectively.

Stone and numerous Irish stone-masons reached Bellaire about the same time. John H. Sullivan had conducted negotiations which ultimately resulted in the dedication to the city of a public square in a central location. That area, later and now the City Park, became the working place for as expert stone-dressers as ever were known. Ohio sandstone for 43 perfect arches, 35 feet above ground, extending three quarters of a mile in a curve on a grade of 60 feet to a mile and constituting an approach for a steel bridge were there cut to fit neatly into 30,000 cubic yards of masonry by men of unexcelled skill and industry. The arcade was completed and dedicated in 1870. It and the bridge, completed the following year, cost one and one-half million dollars, an insignificant sum constant and tremendous use considered.

Constructing the arcade and erecting the bridge combined to produce a major industrial development in the city during the period 1865-1875. Anticipating competition of improved railroad transportation with the Benson Ferry for passengers and freight between Bellaire and Wheeling encouraged the establishment in 1865 of a horse-

drawn coach line from the center of the city to the ferry landing.

Largely due to enterprising German citizens the Bellaire Works was incorporated November 14, 1866, for the manufacture of cut nails. The company acquired a site in the area abandoned in 1928 by the Carnegie Steel Co. Continuing to prosper, a blast furnace was added in 1872. Meanwhile William G. Barnard had opened a coal mine, had developed a ^{sandstone and} limestone quarry in the hills west of the industrial site and had acquired land on which many workmen built homes. An abundance of high-grade steam coal, ~~an~~ extensive strata of limestone, a temporarily satisfactory grade of fire clay and a reasonably wide expanse of level land, all easily accessible, united in developing the steel, brick and roofing-tile plants in the Indian Run section. The extension of the city northerly to include Gravel Hill as a residential district was a natural result.

As demand for cut nails decreased with the improvement of the wire variety, the expansion of the steel-making facilities increased. Bellaire ceased to be known as the Nail City. Three more blast furnaces and a bar-mill were added to the plant. Steady work twelve hours daily afforded employment in the principal industry of the city, ~~until~~, the product of which was bars for rolling into tin plate in the Laughlin and other subsidiary works of companies, finally merged into the U. S. Steel Corporation. Obsolescence of facilities, high cost of production and competition with larger and more completely integrated plants, in addition to labor discontent, gradually took a heavy toll. In consequence all operations of the Carnegie Steel Company in Bellaire were abandoned in 1928, its plant was dismantled, the site cleared of all structures, except a few general purpose buildings, and