

Menomonie Middle School 8th Grade Language Arts

Travel Diary from Susan B. Anthony Traveling to Menomonie, WI

By: Grace E.

It was the year 1875 and I was on the train on the way to give a speech. It was a long trip to the Wilson family house but when I finally arrived it was warm and inviting. The house was grand but modest. I was kindly greeted by William Wilson, his wife Angeline, and their 7 children. I was very intrigued by this small town and wanted to learn more. So let's go back to the beginning of this trip.

I was scheduled to arrive and give a speech a few days later in a place called Menomonie on May 4th, 1875. When I got to this small town, I was to stay with the Wilson Family in their house. But we got delayed. My agent accidentally misled us to Menominee, Michigan instead of Menomonie, Wisconsin. After we had found our way, we were on the train to Menomonie. The trip from my home in Rochester NY to Menomonie was a little less than 1 day's worth of traveling. We arrived at the train depot in Menomonie on November 6th. When looking at my surroundings after getting off the train I saw the depot clearly, it was small but mighty with a vibrant red color painting the outside walls. Behind the depot, there were trees extended farther than my eyes could see. These trees were all different colors, as it was fall when I arrived. Red, orange, yellow, and green were all there working in unison to paint a beautiful landscape.

Looking to my left I saw a carriage that as I was told by my agent, was for us. One of the men next to the carriage kindly took our bags for us and another helped me up to the leather seats. As we started our short trip from the train depot to the Wilson house I took in all the surroundings. The sounds of birds chirping and the horse's hooves hitting the ground. The river following the trail that we had been on. The beautiful colors of fall and the slight breeze passing through, making me shiver a bit.

"It will only be a couple of minutes until we arrive!" the coachman yells back at us after a while.

I am now able to see the chimney of the house I will be staying in. I see it clearer and clearer as we get closer, finally ending in a stop at the end of the driveway. I was again helped out of the carriage by the coachman who I told "thank you". After gathering my bags, me and my agent strolled up the house. As we walked up the gravel driveway I was thinking about the speeches I had planned and thinking "is there anything I can add?" "I'll come back to that idea when I am not as tired" I thought after. Once we had made it up to the house I was able to take in the details. The house looked like it was made of stone and had lots of very intricate and interesting details. There was a very beautiful stone fence topped with plants that were once green but are now beautiful

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shades of orange. An inviting white bench was sitting in front of the house surrounded by flowers. "That looks like a lovely place to read", I thought to myself. As I looked the opposite way from the house I saw a vast lake which my agent told me was called Lake Menomin.

After the trip, I was exhausted but I was also excited to meet the family I would be staying with and learn about them and this town. Once we made it to the front door we knocked and the Wilson Family greeted us very kindly and with open arms. My agent had told me some information ahead of time to prepare me with topics to talk about with them. Some of the things I learned was that Captain William Wilson was the one who built this house for his family. They are the family that I am staying with on this trip. Wilson was also the First Mayor of this small town and the area's first state senator. He worked in the lumber field and worked with influential people from this town such as Mr. Stout.

Walking into the house I was amazed by the dark wooden staircase, velvet furniture, and the elaborate mirrors scattered around the house. My agent took my bags upstairs as the Wilsons gave me a tour of their house. After the entryway was the parlor, with multiple patterned chairs, a worn-out rocking chair which I assumed was a family heirloom, and lastly a marble fireplace with gold details. The next room up was the dining room. There was a big circular wooden table in the middle with chairs of the same wood around it. On the walls of the room were china cabinets filled with the Wilson's finest dishes. The statement of the room though was the beaded velvet chandelier hanging above the table. Lastly, they showed me to my room and the bathroom I would be using. It was on the second floor so we walked up the beautiful wooden stairs. The bedroom had a four-poster bed with floral sheets and fluffed pillows. On the right side of the room was a dark wooden vanity and next to it was where my bags were set. After showing me where everything was, the Wilsons left downstairs and Angeline, Mr. Wilson's wife, told me dinner would be ready in about an hour.

After getting settled in my room, I first decided to touch up my hair after the long trip. Looking in the mirror of the vanity I saw myself with a bun of dark brown hair on the top of my head. I was wearing a long green dress with a collared shirt underneath. After tidying up my hair, I decided to go back to my thoughts from earlier about if I could add anything to my speeches. The titles of them were "Women want bread, not the ballet" for the Tuesday lecture and "Women, Purity and Temperance" for the Wednesday lecture. I was considering changing the title of my first speech "Women want bread, not the ballot." This was because people could take it the wrong way but I knew once I started talking and expanding what it meant that people would understand. It was about women needing both the ballot and bread, not just one. The bread in this case is a

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symbol for subsistence with the ballot and the importance of voting. After thinking and writing for what I thought was only 5 minutes but turned out to be 1 hour, I heard Angeline calling me down for dinner.

As I walked down the velvet runner on the grand wooden staircase into the dining room I was hit with all the smells of happiness and joy. Roast beef with all the fixings. Mashed potatoes and vegetables such as corn and peas were being served. "It's like Thanksgiving day!" I thought to myself as I sat down next to Captain Wilson and his wife Angeline. While we were eating they told me stories about Menomonie and their lives. I once again thanked them for their hospitality. Angeline went back into the kitchen after we were done eating dinner and brought out a cake. On closer inspection, it was my favorite sponge cake! "They must have done some research on what I like" I thought to myself as she cut off big slices of it. After dessert had ended their eldest children showed me to the living room where we conversed about where we were from, them Menomonie and me Rochester. We also talked about the speeches that I would be giving the following day. I wasn't able to share the topics with them but we talked about the venue I would be talking in, Concert Hall, which I was informed by the Wilsons was a very beautiful building.

We talked for ages, so long I forgot what time it was. After looking at the clock I told the Wilsons "it's getting late, I should probably get to bed to prepare for the day ahead".

"It has been a joy having you stay with us, thank you and I wish you a peaceful rest" responded Angeline.

"Thank you" I responded before I walked back up the stairs to my room.

After I put on my sleeping gown and bonnet, I tucked into bed falling into a sound sleep ready for the day ahead.

When I woke up the next morning, the sun was just rising above the lake with beautiful shades of orange and yellow. After I put on my outfit for the day I walked downstairs ready for the day. Angeline was in the kitchen cooking breakfast and it smelled delicious! She was making a fruit salad when I came downstairs but there was also oatmeal and fresh bread and marmalade. Angeline and her children greeted me as I sat down at the dining table. After we had all sat down at the table with food, we started talking more about the town and women's rights. My lecture is later in the day so I have time to work some more on the topics and tidy up what I would be saying. After the meal, I thanked them and headed back upstairs to my room to work on my lecture.

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Fast forward, it is now lunchtime and the littlest child brought a lunch of leftovers from the dinner before up to my room. Fast forward again, it was now dinner time and I didn't have much time to eat because my lecture was in about an hour. We had a light dinner of turkey and some vegetables.

After dinner, it was time to get ready to leave to the Concert Hall for my lecture. I grabbed my coat from the closet and the Wilsons and I walked outside. When we got outside there was a carriage waiting for us. The coachmen helped us in and we started on our short trip to the Hall. The ride was peaceful as it was almost night. Once we arrived we were helped out of the carriage and we walked inside. We were about half an hour early so I was able to walk around the venue. The Hall had lots of intricate details and the stage had a podium for me to talk by. I went backstage to wait for the audience to arrive. People slowly started trickling in as it was getting closer to the time of the lecture. Now it was only 3 minutes till the lecture and I was getting ready to go on stage.

It was time! I walked on stage and everyone started to clap as I stepped up to the podium. I started my lecture by introducing myself and the topic of the night "Women want bread, not the ballot." I could tell that the audience was a bit confused by the topic but once I started to explain it they seemed to understand. This topic was about how women wanted bread meaning subsistence and the ballot. Some subtopics I talked about were employment, women being equal to men, and higher wages for women. After I was done talking everyone clapped and I walked off the stage.

Once I was done and had talked with occasional people from the town including the Wilsons, I grabbed my coat. The Wilsons and I all walked out of the building and back to the carriage that we took to the Hall. It was so late that I almost fell asleep on the way back to the house. Once we got back to the house I told the Wilson's goodnight and collapsed into my bed.

The next morning I woke up and walked downstairs again and today for breakfast was eggs, bacon, and toast. The rest of the day was the same as the day before. Before I knew it, it was dinner time. This day we had ham and potatoes for our meal. We grabbed our coats and headed outside to the same carriage we took the last few days. After we got to the Hall I got settled again backstage. We got there a little later today because I didn't need time today to tour the Hall. After about 10 minutes it was now time for my last lecture in Menomonie. This one was titled "Women, Purity, and Temperance." Some subtopics I talked about were, diseases happening to women and the people who helped in this field.

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Again, I talked with occasional people from the town including the Wilsons, and then grabbed my coat. We took the same carriage as before. I was even more tired today so again when we got home I said goodnight to the Wilsons and went to sleep soon after that.

I woke up pretty late in the morning and walked downstairs to a very grand breakfast for my last morning with the Wilsons. There were pancakes, waffles, fruit, eggs, toast, and bacon. Over breakfast, we were talking even more about the speeches.

“Both of the speeches were very interesting!” Angeline told me

“Thank you” I responded. “And thank you for letting me stay with you!”

After breakfast, I grabbed my bags from upstairs, and then it was time to leave. I thanked the Wilsons and hugged everyone goodbye.

“Thank you!” I said as I was leaving.

I got into the carriage and as I rode away the Wilsons waved at me as we pulled out of the driveway. The travel was the same as when I first arrived a few days prior, a little later in fall though. A cool breeze crept through the trees and the birds were singing. Once we arrived at the train depot, I got off the carriage and grabbed my bags. I went into the depot and bought a ticket for the ride home. The train was supposed to arrive in a couple of minutes so I sat down on one of the benches outside of the depot to wait. After a little bit longer than expected the train arrived so my agent and I got on. We sat down and that's everything. I am on the train back to my home in Rochester NY as I am writing this.

Farwell,
Susan

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