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# DANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER



The Dane County Historical Society Office and the Otto Schroeder Records Center are located in the lower level of the Lussier Family Heritage Building on Lake Farm Road just south of the Beltline near Lake Waubesa.

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## Historical Exhibit at Dane Co. Regional Airport

By Mary Clark

Dane County turns 175 years old in 2011! Last year, County Executive Kathleen Falk and County Board Chair Scott McDonnell invited a committee of citizens to come together and create a plan to mark this

significant milestone year. Jerry Remy representing Dane County Historical Society and the Belleville Historical Society was selected to participate on the 175th Anniversary Committee. Visit the Celebrate Dane County website at <http://danecounty175.org> to learn more about upcoming events celebrating Dane County's 175th Anniversary.



As part of the celebration, Dane County Historical Society collaborated with the County's 175th Anniversary Committee to create an exciting historical exhibit which opened at the Dane County Regional Airport on February 11, 2011. The kiosk exhibit is located in the public airline check-in area; the exhibit will remain up throughout this anniversary year.

The kiosk consists of six separate panels – three large panels and three smaller panels. Dane County Historical Society prepared historical content for the exhibit to tell the story of the history of Dane County.

Historical topics on the kiosk panels include:

- *The Beginnings of Dane County.* This panel highlights early settlement of the county, back to prehistoric times through the first European immigrants.
- *Madison – Capital City.* This panel chronicles the selection of Madison as the state capital and the sequence of capitol buildings from 1836 to the present.
- *Dane County Regional Airport – All About the Journey.* This panel chronicles the life of the Dane County Regional Airport from its beginning in 1936, through WWII and up until the present. The content for this panel was not created by DCHS; it was put together by Jennifer Miller, Communications and Marketing Coordinator for the Dane County Regional Airport.



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# Southwest Communities – “The Early Years”

### Blue Mounds

The origins of the present village of Blue Mounds began with the 1820s rough and rough community of Potosi. This mining boomtown, located slightly west, straddled what is now the Dane-Iowa County line. Gambling was its fortune was won and lost every night under one chandelier.

On the stage line between Madison and Mineral Point, the town had 16 one- and two-story hotels, 400 houses, jewelry, tailors, blacksmiths and other merchants. The village continued to thrive during the Civil War years, but its decline had already begun by 1855, when the Northwestern Railroad came through and established a depot a mile west. House by house, stone by stone Potosi slipped away. A number of the buildings were moved to the new village site.

The new village of Blue Mounds grew up near the depot. Hotels appeared, a feed mill, liveryyard, cheese factory, general store, a bank and tradesmen of all types made up the business district by the turn of the twentieth century.

When the new Chicago Northwestern Railroad depot was built a mile west in 1880 merchants began to relocate to the new commercial heart of the village. “The Corners” soon became known as Old Town.



Blue Mounds, Wis., 1905



Blue Mounds, Wis., 1910



Mt. Horeb, Wis.

### Mt. Horeb

The intersection of well traveled roads created the initial location of the village. The Military Road and the roads to Mt. Vernon and Verona (Old Sugar Road) established what came to be known as Horeb's Corners. Mt. Horeb was the official name of the 1861 established post office.

Early settlers, many Scottish and English, and others from the eastern states established their selves around “The Corners.” During the Civil War and for decades after, the business life of the Corners stayed active.



Mount Horeb, Wis., 1910



Mt. Horeb, Wis., 1910



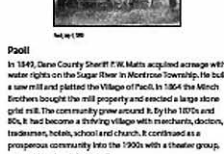
Mt. Vernon, Wis.

### Mt. Vernon

Located on the middle branch of the Sugar River, a saw mill was erected on this site in 1849 by George Witt. He platted the village in 1851 and named it Mt. Vernon. A grist mill was built in 1858 and around it developed the village. The mill drew business from a large area. Hotels and other merchants became part of a busy main street reaching its heyday by 1880. The village began its decline when the railroad from Verona went to Mt. Horeb was built on the north side of the ridge, rather than coming up the Sugar River valley through Mt. Vernon.



Mt. Vernon, Wis.



Mt. Vernon, Wis.



Verona, Wis.

### Verona

Two Scotsmen, James Young and Thomas Stewart, were the first to establish residence in the township in the late 1820s. With the building of a grist mill on Badger Creek in 1843, George Woman and William Wheeler established a small settlement around it in the valley just south of today's present village. The mill was sold to Samuel Taylor and this small community was briefly known as Taylorville.

To the north of the mill site, Joseph Flick and H.C. Matis both acquired homestead land grants of large acreage in 1845. These properties included the major intersection of the east-west road (Mineral River to Milwaukee) and the well-traveled north-south road (Sawey to Galena).

Both gentlemen sold lots along these routes which developed into Verona's new residential and business district. Matis also sold land for the cemetery, the antebellum railroad and decided land for a Baptist church.

Two substantial brick homes were built at the corners by Matis and his brother-in-law, John Meyers, their wives being Flick sisters. The very early travelers first, the Eagles Nest, occupied one of the other corners.



Verona, Wis.



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Mt. Horeb, Wis., 1910



Mt. Horeb, Wis.



Blue Mounds, Wis., 1910



Blue Mounds, Wis., 1910

- **Early Farming in Dane County.** This panel describes the history of agriculture in the county from early wheat farming to the importance of the dairy industry today.
- **Robert M. La Follette “Fighting Bob”** This panel highlights the life and career of Dane County’s favorite son, Robert M. La Follette, known as “Fighting Bob.”
- **Early Dane County Communities.** The final panel is actually a set that includes four panels, each showcasing a number of early Dane County communities in pictures and text. The content on this section will change throughout the year to highlight early communities in different parts of the county. The first panel profiles communities in the Southwest area of the state, including Belleville, Blue Mounds, Mt. Horeb, Mt. Vernon, Paoli and Verona.

You can see the full-text of each of the panels prepared by DCHS on the Dane County Historical Society website at <http://danecountyhistory.org/airport/county>.

1836 1856 1876 1896 1916 1936 1956 1976 1996 2011

## Early Farming in Dane County

Wisconsin is America's Dairyland and Dane County plays a large part in that designation. There are 400 dairy farms in Dane County with about 50,000 dairy cows that make up the county's \$700 million a year dairy industry today. However, dairy farming was not always as important to the county as it is today. It was many years after the first immigrants came to the county before dairy farming took hold in south central Wisconsin.

The first immigrants to the area grew wheat almost exclusively. Wheat was easy to grow and produced results quickly, even allowing farmers to harvest two crops per year. The years between 1840 and 1870 saw quick and profitable production of wheat in southern Wisconsin.

The quick rise in popularity of wheat production resulted in very little crop rotation; the soil began to weaken. Lower prices and a chinch bug infestation in the 1860s contributed to a decline in wheat production. By the end of the 1860s, farmers began to see the need to diversify their crops.

Corn and tobacco came into the Dane County picture. With an increase in livestock farming came feed crops such as hay and oats.

By the 1870s the tide was turning and cheese factories were established in nearly every town. Several factors contributed to dairy farming becoming the important industry it is today in Dane County:

- ◆ The advent of cylindrical silos for winter grain/feeder storage.
- ◆ The establishment of various "dairymen's associations" which promoted new dairying methods and helped transition local farmers from wheat growing to dairying.
- ◆ The creation of the Agricultural College at the University of Wisconsin in Madison which brought farming and science together and helped spread the science of dairy farming to local farmers throughout the county.

The UW Dairy Barn is located on the agricultural campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The building was constructed as a result of lobbying by the UW Dean of Agriculture, William Henry. In addition to its use as a teaching facility for Wisconsin dairy farmers, the Dairy Barn was the site of significant scientific experiments, including selective breeding of cattle and testing for diseases like bovine tuberculosis. These developments, among others, were instrumental in Wisconsin's increased adoption of dairy farming in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which resulted in its reputation as America's Dairyland.

Woman milking the family cow. Wisconsin Historical Society Image ID: 48118

Woman in a field of ripening corn at a farmstead of Wisconsin. Madison, Wisconsin State Library. Image ID: 3028

University of Wisconsin - Madison Agricultural campus with sheep and a cow in the background. Wisconsin Historical Society Image ID: 48001

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# Record Center Highlights – Fifty Nifties

By Barbara Furstenberg

*In commemoration of the Dane County Historical Society's 50th anniversary in 2011, we have selected "Fifty Nifty" items or collections to highlight from the Otto Schroeder Records Center that reflect the range of materials in the archive. This is the second installment (records 11-20) of the "Nifties" series.*

Bill Clark, a prime founder of the Dane County Historical Society, was the Dane County agricultural agent for many years. This position brought him into association with important county groups. One of these was Madison City-Farmer's Club, "a convivial group of land-based people whose roots rest deep in the land and in agriculture." Group members lived in Madison and other Dane County communities while owning farms throughout the county. The group included John Craig, who ran a business managing these farms and Delma Woodburn, a city farmer who owned her family farm, the Donald farm, near Mount Horeb. The group organized in 1943 and presented programs, tours and outdoor activities for members. In the early 1960s, Dane County's "Blue Print for Growth" publication cited a need for a county historical society, stating that a "number of City Farmers felt the need for such an organization and a nucleus of history society boosters developed among the club members." That formed the beginnings of the Dane County Historical Society. With leaders who had such an involvement with Dane County's agricultural roots, it is little wonder that some of the earliest collections acquired by the Society related to farming. The first five items in this installment of "Fifty Nifties" describe a few of these.

John William "Bill" Clark papers. Bill Clark, a native Iowan, exemplified the Wisconsin Idea in his wide-ranging endeavors to incorporate learning into daily life, especially for farmers. Clark's papers include correspondence, agricultural bulletins, photographs, speeches and other materials regarding his UW career, as well as records concerning his involvement with county organizations, such as the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District; and personal materials, such as his involvement with traveling Circuit Chautauquas in the early 20th century. Clark organized a Citizens' Planning Committee in the early 1960s that analyzed county problems with benchmarks for direction of future growth. Their "Blue Print for Growth" revealed new synergies between urban and rural areas.

Malone Cheese Factory records. (1902-1957, 1972). Archival records in 1 folder plus one volume. Founded

as the Springdale Cheese Company in 1925, the business was later known as the Vernon Valley Cheese Factory and ultimately, the Malone Cheese Factory. The cheese factory closed in 1957. It was located on Highway 92 between Mount Horeb and Mount Vernon. Records include articles of incorporation as a cooperative, board minutes (1925-1957), stockholder records, and income/expense statements (1937-1956). The statements often include totals for amount of milk, butterfat, cheese and cream handled and for the average test of the milk. Also present are the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the Wisconsin Swiss & Limburger Cheese Producers' Association (Cooperative) in 1938 and newspaper clippings about the Swiss cheese industry. Delma Woodburn was responsible for preservation of this collection.

Dane County Cooperative Dairy Herd Improvement Association records. (1945-1985). Archival records in 1½ full size archives boxes. This collection documents the business operations of a countywide cooperative dairy group established to promote efficiency on dairy farms by providing a cattle breeding and milk testing service for member farms. The organization was formalized out of a program begun in 1925 by the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture and County Extension as part of a national effort to involve dairymen in policy formation and in the potential of record keeping programs on farms. Uniform record keeping facilitated the development of the national artificial breeding program. The records consist of meeting minutes, financial records, newsletters and annual meeting programs. The minutes are complete for the years 1945-1961, and cover the group's organizational meeting when by-laws were adopted.

Dane County Holstein Breeders' Cooperative Association records. (1946-1989). Archival records in 1½ full size archives boxes. The fragmentary records of this cooperative consist mainly of catalogs, 1946-85, 1989, for "Opportunity Sales" auctions, aimed at selling animals owned by youth members of 4-H and Future Farmers of America. There are photographs

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## Record Center Highlights – Fifty Nifties (Continued from page 3)

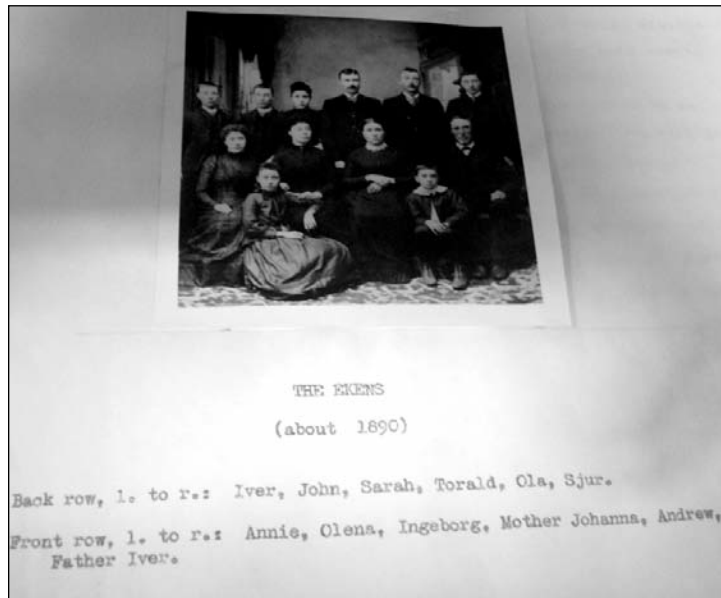
of the cows for sale, information on their blood lines, and production statistics. Other records include membership lists and directories, annual meeting agendas, financial summary statements and lists of awards.

Happy Wanderers 4-H Club records. (1961-1988). Archival records in 2 full size archives boxes plus 3 flat archives boxes. This collection documents the activities of a very active youth organization between 1961-88. The record books were judged at county fairs in competitions and as a result, are extremely complete. Scrapbooks and recognition certificates enhance the records. Of particular interest are the many programs for activities that the Happy Wanderers participated in, including music and drama festivals, talent shows, dog shows, a foods review and speaking contests. Club-produced cookbooks illustrate the club's outreach. The 4-H movement was started after 1914 when Congress charged the newly created Cooperative Extension Office to organize boys and girls clubs. The Happy Wanderers 4-H Club was one of many Madison, Wis. area branches of 4-H. After the club disbanded, this collection was donated to DCHS by Gloria Waitey in honor of the founder and long time leader Harry Papcke.

Yahara Culture Club records. (1914-1917). There are three yearbooks for the Stoughton women's organization. Information includes the theme for the year, officers and committee members, schedule of meetings and special events.

Eken Family History. (1836-1971). The Dane County Historical Society does not have many resources of interest to genealogists, but there are a few specialized family histories in the collection. This is a nine page, typed and mimeographed genealogical essay written in 1971 by Ingebor Grinde Worringer. It includes a B&W photograph (ca. 1890) of the Eken family. The family founders, Iver and Johanna Iverson emigrated from Sogn, Norway to Norway Grove, WI. In America, they adopted the name Eken. The essay contains individual biographical sketches for all ten of the Eken children: Thorald, Ola, Ingebor (Emma), Sjur, Annie, Sarah, Iver Jr., John, Olena and Andrew, as well as details on their descendants, who mostly settled in the Madison, Wisconsin area. Thorald and

Ola's farm near the Oscar Mayer plant on the northeast side of Madison was later platted and named Eken Park.



Windsor Neighborhood Club records. (1930-1956). Archival records in 1 half size archives box. The records of this club contain a constitution, articles of incorporation, and various mortgages, insurance and financial records for the club that was incorporated in 1930 for educational, benevolent, charitable, and improvement purposes in the community of Windsor.

Madison Civics Club records. (1912-2003). Archival records in 2 full size archives boxes. Records begin in 1912, when the organization was formed by five prominent Madison area women concerned with the issue of women's suffrage. The five founding members were Georgia H. Lloyd Jones, Alice H. Bleyer, Edna Chynoweth, Lucille McCarthy and Mary B. Orvis. Mrs. Bleyer served as the first chair of the organization. The membership was expanded by these original members each inviting three women to join, who then each invited two people to join, giving the group a total of 50 members. A candidate was to be "brainy and outstanding in her own right and must honestly have developed a civic conscience." Membership quickly expanded from 50 to 100 members. The membership was 500 in 1962, with a waiting list of over 500 names. Emphasis of the group shifted to general civic affairs and social issues after women won the right to vote. The collection consists of clippings, invitations, a scrapbook, annual reports, lists of officers and correspondence. Among the items in the collection relating to the group's 50th and 75th anniversary

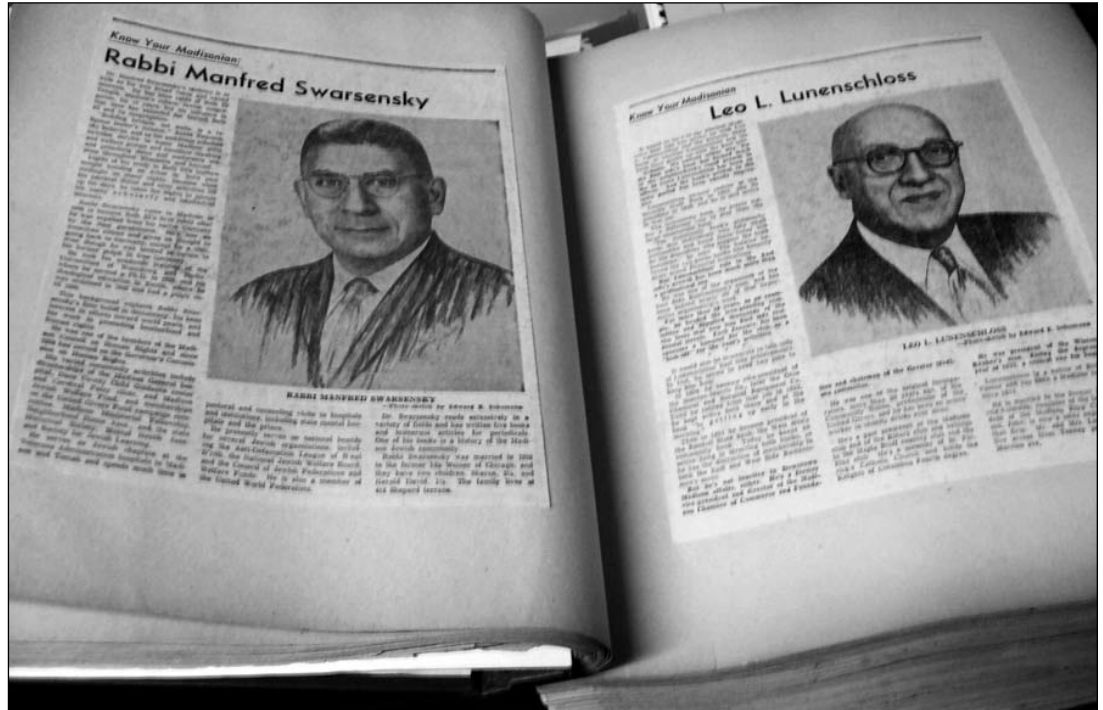
Continued on page 5

## Record Center Highlights – Fifty Nifties (Continued from page 4)

sary celebrations are materials regarding a dramatic script, "Time Weaves a Tapestry," by Robert E. Gard. The club became very popular among community leaders and prominent professional women, with programs featuring speakers such as Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart, Carl Sandburg, Vincent Price and Nelson Rockefeller.

Know Your Madisonian Scrapbooks. (1956-1976). These two large bound red volumes (each about 6 inches thick), contain copies of news clippings from the Wisconsin State Journal Sunday column that presented brief profiles of business, professional, civic and social leaders alongside charcoal portraits created by Madison artist Edward E. Schumann. Mr. Schumann donated these scrapbooks containing

more than 1,000 profiles. DCHS volunteer Shirley Levine has created a name index to the volumes, spending countless hours at Madison Newspapers to correctly identify the dates.



## President's Message from Mary Clark



Mary Clark

Being the President of an organization like Dane County Historical Society invokes a lot of different feelings for me. There is pride at being able to participate in one of the oldest and most respected local historical organizations in our county; there is frustration at not being able to get more members involved in the activities of the society; there is awe when I see some of the amazing historical projects that our area middle- and high-school students produce for National History Day; there is guilt at sometimes not getting our newsletter put together in as timely manner as I should; there is gratitude when I see our archives program moving forward through the hard work of our dedicated volunteers; and there is delight when we are able to answer research questions or point someone to historical facts that they might not have found otherwise. I am sometimes overwhelmed by the amount of work there is to do, but at the same time enthusiastic about digging in and getting it all done.

So you can see that, on the whole, the experience is much more positive than negative.

I love being part of what the Dane County Historical Society represents.

The Society received a shot in the arm this year as our membership increased due to a widespread membership drive. I invite any of our new members or friends to become more involved. We have opportunities for volunteering and we have vacant seats on the Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving on the board, contact us or come to a Board Meeting. The Board of Directors meets the third Monday of every month at 4:00pm.

This year DCHS will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary. We have a number of plans for programs, exhibits and activities. The year was kicked off by the mounting of the Dane County History kiosk exhibit at the Dane County Regional Airport. We were so pleased to be asked to place the exhibit at the airport. It was a lot of work, but it turned into a wonderful exhibit. If you haven't been out there to see it, it is worth the trip!

# Explore NewspaperARCHIVE to discover historical newspapers...for free!!

By Stef Morrill

NewspaperARCHIVE is a unique database of historical newspapers that includes close to a million scanned pages from newspapers spanning over 200 years, including the Wisconsin State Journal from 1852 to 2009 and The Capital Times from 1917 to 2007. (Note: Every issue from every year may not be available: these date ranges guarantee at least partial coverage of all included years). If you are a resident of Wisconsin, you have FREE access to this database through a program called BadgerLink.

To get started, visit the BadgerLink website: <http://www.badgerlink.net>. Choose the "Access NewspaperARCHIVE" link near the top of the page. You may be asked for your public library card number, or you may go right to the database.

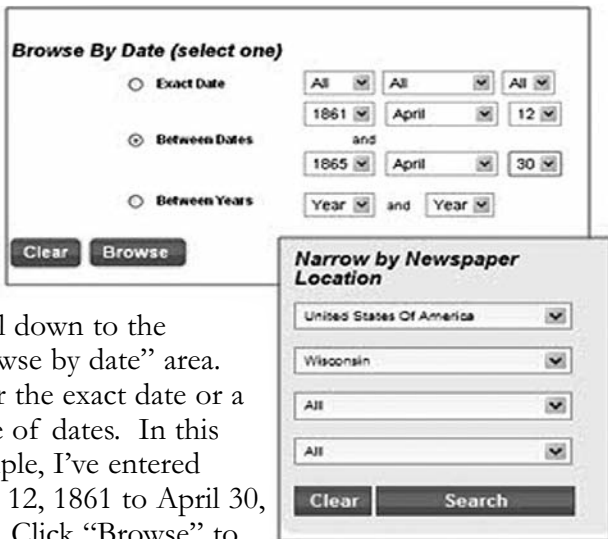
Once in the NewspaperARCHIVE database, you can search for historical articles, including obituaries, in two different ways: Browse or Search



the right-hand column. Add your limiters and click the "Search" button again .... and you will be transported back to the 1860s where you'll find gems like this, showing how the war was being perceived and portrayed on the home front back in Wisconsin.



1. You can browse by newspaper or browse by date. For example, if you wanted to read some newspaper articles from the Civil War era, you could browse newspapers from 1861-1865. To do this, click the "Browse" tab at the top of the screen.



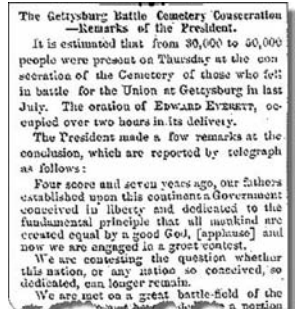
Scroll down to the "Browse by date" area. Enter the exact date or a range of dates. In this example, I've entered April 12, 1861 to April 30, 1865. Click "Browse" to find newspapers in this time period.

Once you have your search results, if you want to limit results to just Wisconsin, it's easy to do! Refine your results by "Narrow by Newspaper Location" in



2. Searching allows you to look for specific names, words or phrases in an article, and also to roughly limit by date or location. Start by clicking on the "Search" tab at the top of the screen.

For example, if you wanted to read newspaper coverage from Wisconsin of the Gettysburg Address, you could search for the phrase "Four score and seven" and limit to 1863 and to Wisconsin. Once you search, a result from the Wisconsin State Journal from November 21, 1863 appears, with this column on the front page:



Give NewspaperARCHIVE a try! You'll be amazed at what you can find! If you need help accessing or searching the database, contact your local public library. A list of libraries in Dane County is available online at: <http://www.scls.lib.wi.us/dcl/libraries.html>

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# Dane County Historical Society Has a New Seal

By Mary Clark

In 1962 the newly formed Dane County Historical Society created an official seal to represent the society. The seal was designed to depict some important events in Dane County's history as well as to highlight areas where the society hoped to stir activity in the county.

That seal remains the symbol of our society today and is still used on all our publications and correspondence. However, as we are moving into our anniversary year, the DCHS Board of Directors felt the seal needed a little facelift. The original seal was created back in the days before electronic images and desktop publishing. It had been photocopied and reproduced thousands of times over the years until it became difficult to produce a clean and sharp image any more. To take the Society into the future, we have updated the seal while still retaining the spirit of the original.

Some of the subtle changes to the seal include removing the word "Madison" from the bottom of the seal. It was felt that although the society is headquartered in Madison, we wanted to better represent the whole county, not just the capital city. We added "Est. 1961" to highlight and celebrate the fifty years of the society.

The new seal retains the original design depicting the four corners of the county.

Original DCHS Seal



New, Revised DCHS Seal



- The upper right quadrant represents the marshlands and prairie areas of the northeast section of the county. The first settlers in the area, including Augustus A. Bird, came from Milwaukee to build a capitol for the Wisconsin Territory in Madison. They had ridden so long in the rain and celebrated when they reached a clearing with the sun shining for the first time in days. They carved the words "Sun Prairie" into a tree.
- The lower right quadrant of the original seal depicted a scene from the early settlement days when farmers gathered for an outdoor church service. The southeast area of the county is noted for its vigorous Norwegian churches. For the new updated seal we opted for a simpler representation of the subject using the unique architecture of the West Koshkonong Lutheran Church in the Town of Christiana, built in 1852; it was torn down in 1892 and a new church built in its place the next year.
- The lower left quadrant of the original seal showed the artist's interpretation of the old fort at Blue Mounds. At the time that the original seal was created, the society had dreams of restoring the fort as a tourist attraction. For the updated seal, we chose to go simpler and more "politically correct" by focusing more on the fort itself and less on the feared attacks and cultural clashes of the day.
- The upper left quadrant shows the old Kehl winery near the town of Roxbury, just off Highway 188. Built in 1867, it was the center of the wine industry. Following Peter Kehl's death, his son Jacob operated the winery until his death in 1899. In 1972, the Wollersheims purchased the property, replanted the vineyards and refurbished the underground wine cellars.

Compare the old and new! Watch for the new seal representing the Dane County Historical Society as we celebrate our anniversary and look forward to the next fifty years.

