

Directory of Dane County, 1904-8

By Debbie Kmetz

This article appeared in the DCHS Newsletter as part of the *Records Center Highlights* series. The series features noteworthy pieces and little known treasures found in Dane County Historical Society's Otto Schroeder Records Center.

G. R. Angell & Co.'s *Directory of Dane County, 1904 – 8* measures approximately 6" x 9," containing 231 pages. The title page offers an indication of the fascinating material that follows: a General and Classified Business Directory; a Professional Directory of the County; Lists of the 91 Rural Free Delivery Routes and Rural Patrons of the Postoffices; a Government R.F.D. Map of the County; and a Farmers' Telephone Directory. Madison listings are excluded from the general and classified business directories, but are included in the professional directory. Though the Otto Schroeder Records Center has two copies of this book, unfortunately neither one contains the R.F.D. map.

The book's first several pages provide background material. An introductory passage notes that Nathan Dane, for whom the county was named, drafted the nation's Northwest Ordinance. It was "adopted by Congress without a single alteration July 13, 1787." The passage goes on to say, "The clause which has been the subject of most frequent remark provides 'that there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory.' "

A list of federal, state and county officers follows. At the time of the book's publication, Theodore Roosevelt held the office of President and Robert M. La Follette served as Wisconsin governor. The book estimated the population of Dane County at 80,000.

General and Classified Business Directory

The General and Classified Business Directory comprises the first third of the book. It opens with listings for the city of Stoughton, followed alphabetically by listings for each of the 34 villages in the county. Each entry begins with a very brief description of the city or village, containing the kind of information that might be useful to business people, as well as noteworthy highlights. Albion's description relates that there is a "... stage connection twice daily with Edgerton, the banking point."

BE KRONCKE BROS. For Kitchen Utensils

The Mutual Benefit Life Ins. Co.
1st Brick—Low Premium Rates.
2nd Brick—Large Annual Dividends.
3rd Brick—Automatic Extended Insurance,
and other values begin with second year.

INVESTIGATE. See
JAMES D. PRINGLE, State Agent
Room 5 Marston Block, Madison, Wis.

*SWENSON GEO W (wf Inger), post-
master gen store
*Wagoner Jno, section foreman
*Welch Edward, agt N W Ry W U Tel
Am Ex Co

LONDON
Population 133, on the C. & N. W. Ry,
2 1/2 miles east of Madison. B. Munson,
P. M.

*Baines Frank S, leaf tobacco tracks h
Janesville Wis
*Bare Wm W (wf Bertha), saloon
*Bergholz Gustave (wf Augusta), com-
mission
Blaschke Elizabeth Mrs
*—Godfrey, watchman N W Ry
*—Herman, lab
*—Jno (wf Alvina), stock buyer
Caughy Mary
*—Robert (wf Nancy), farmer
Christoffers Ethel, teacher
*—Henry (wf Tena B), agt N W Ry W
U Tel Am Ex
COMMERCIAL HOUSE, E Woelffer propr
*Cruger Ernest L (wf Anna), harness
saddlery
District Schtoul
*Douglass Jas, ret
—Mary A J
*Febock Emil (wf Ida), [Neupert & Fe-
bock]
*Gustavson Ole (wf Emma), propr The
London House livery
*Hanson O H, leaf tobacco tracks h Cam-
bridge, Wis
*Harneck August (wf Bertha), lab
Heymann Amelia, dom Commercial House
Johnson Anna, teacher
*Korb Chas (wf Mary), lab
*Leibnow Wm (wf Marie), ret
Leland Mabel
*—Torgor S (wf Anna), agt F S Baines
*Lewis Herman wf Paulina), buttermkr
creamery
London House The, Ole Gustavson propr
Manning Kate, asst postmaster
*—Wm (wf W), farmer
*Mawes Chas (wf Albertine), sec fore-
man N W Ry
M E CHURCH
*MILLER HENRY E (wf Helena), hard-
ware
MORAVIAN CHURCH, Rev Frank Zeller
pastor
*Munson Bennie (wf Libby), postmaster
gen store
Nelson Julia
*—Thos, ret
*Neupert Otto (wf Augusta), [Neupert &
—& Febock] Otto Neupert, Emil Febock],
lumber coal feed grain elevator R & S
*Ottow August (wf Amella), teams R & S
*Peiry Rudolph (wf Matilda), wks N W
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Middleton's description announces, "Monthly Market Day, Tuesday after first Wednesday in each month."

Belleville's text notes that the village has "... an electric light plant, 2 banks, a flour mill, cheese factory and a weekly newspaper – The Recorder ..." In addition to an electric light plant and water works system, Sun Prairie boasts an "excellent fire department." Descriptions for Stoughton, Sun Prairie and Waunakee all include mention of tobacco warehouses.

An alphabetical listing of people and businesses (including institutions such as churches) follows each description. Single individuals receive their own listing; couples are listed together. The husband's name is given first, then the wife's name next, in parentheses. However, in the case of a widow, the wife's name is given first, with her husband's name following in parentheses. An abbreviation denoting an occupation or retirement generally follows the names.

An asterisk next to a name signifies a voter. Not surprisingly, all of the voters are men since the directory predates the passage of the amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote.

A look at the occupations reveals interesting information. Just one page in the Stoughton section contains 101 listings. An examination shows that the entries for single women include five dressmakers, two domestics, two teachers, a clerk, a student, a laundress, a bookkeeper and a waitress. A widow is listed as operating a boarding house. Among the occupations given for men are horseshoer, veterinary surgeon, laborer, painter, saloonkeeper, tobacco buyer, carpenter, traveling salesman, physician and surgeon, barber, electrician, bookkeeper, mason and funeral director. Six men are listed as working at the Stoughton Wagon Co. and eight men at the Mandt Wagon Co.

Some business entries provide descriptions. Readers learn that Stoughton's Mandt Wagon Co. incorporated in May 1902, had capital stock at \$200,000 and produced wagons, sleighs and bolster springs. The names of officers and managers are also given.

As the county's second most populous settlement, Stoughton occupies the most space in this particular section of the book. In contrast, the community of Syene has the smallest entry. A very brief description notes its location on the Chicago and Northwestern's railroad line and also its telephone connection. Syene's three listings include a retired couple, a railroad agent and his wife, and the postmaster and his wife. The postmaster appears to have also been a blacksmith and proprietor of a general store.

R.F.D. Routes

The book's next section lists the county's Rural Free Delivery routes along with the names of the patrons served by each route. The names of the patrons appear alphabetically under their respective route numbers. Additional information follows. For farmers, township names and section numbers identify the location of their farms. Total acreage is also provided. Renters are shown with the letter "r" in parentheses. Where the residents along the rural routes are not farmers, their occupations, such as buttermaker or cheesemaker, are given.

Two entries give the names of people associated with local institutions. A listing under Rural Route 43 provides the names of 40 residents of the "Old Peoples' Home" in Pleasant Springs. The Wisconsin State Hospital for the Insane in Westport lists the names of 130 employees including housemaids, attendants, laundresses, assistant physicians and those on night watch, as

well as a music teacher, gardener, dairymaid, porter, fireman, barber, tailor, carpenter, and druggist storekeeper.

Professional and Classified Business Directories

A two-page professional directory includes Madison listings, providing the names of dentists, lawyers, and physicians and surgeons. Next, a classified business directory organizes businesses alphabetically by type: agricultural implements, apiarists, architects, art goods, auctioneers, etc. Madison listings are omitted from the business directory.

Rural Telephone Directory and Rural Route Index

A five-page “Farmers Telephone Directory” follows. It lists the patrons of 21 independent telephone lines operating within the county. The book concludes with a one-page index of the rural post office routes according to township.

This is indeed a fascinating volume. Though the entries do not necessarily provide a definitive listing of every individual and business in a community, collectively they offer important glimpses into rural life at the beginning of the 20th century. For instance, a look at the business directory reveals an era when many goods were made and repaired locally - by boat builders, broom manufacturers, cobblers, cigar manufacturers, tinsmiths, carpet weavers, dressmakers and harness makers. In addition to the kinds of facts that will delight family and community historians, this book also offers a sense of the time when life in many American communities was poised at the edge of great changes – in terms of transportation, communication, power, social relationships, and relationships with the rest of the world.

The book is laden with advertisements, which themselves offer a “snapshot” of the times. The German American Bank in Madison, established in 1871, displays multiple advertisements throughout the volume. Each one alerts readers to different services such as: “Money sent to all parts of the world,” “Steamship Tickets sold on all principal Tran-Atlantic Lines,” “Loans Made on Real Estate security,” and “Inheritances Collected from Germany and all parts of Europe.” Within two decades, the county’s ties to Germany would be severely tested.

Finally, a somewhat unusual visual surprise awaits readers. Three of the book’s pages are actual wallpaper samples from the Pollard-Taber Co. of Madison. The books at the Otto Schroeder Records Center have probably been closed for most of the century since the wallpaper was bound into the volumes. Thus, the samples retain a brilliance and intensity of color. Whether a reader is looking for family names, local businesses, farm acreage, rural routes, or even wallpaper samples, this is quite an impressive volume.

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